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EVENTS FEBRUARY

Regulars

- 010 **NEWS**
Some celebrity gossip, a little dirty news, Swordy and Gordy's columns and the results of the 2008 DBR Awards...
- 019 **UNSUNG HERO**
Ray Archer is one of the world's leading motocross photographers
- 021 **MANO O MANO**
Former KTM team-mates Tyla Rattray and Tommy Searle go head-to-head
- 023 **BLARNEY**
Stevie welcomes in the New Year with a massive Millsy bang
- 025 **JONTY'S BOX**
Is the WEC safe from the credit crunch?
- 027 **RANT**
A page that's full to the brim with readers' letters
- 028 **STUFF**
A plethora of tasty treats and off-road products that will float your boat
- 058 **BURNICLE'S BEAT**
Honda ruled the roost for well over 20 years until their win streak dried up
- 080 **MAGAZINE MACHINE**
Say hello to our new Gas Gas TXT250
- 082 **PROJECT SHED 2**
The Shed of Dread gets pulled to pieces before being shown a little tenderness
- 086 **WALKER'S WORLD**
It's cold and wet outside so now is the time to waterproof your weapon
- 090 **STATESIDE**
The AMA supercross season kicks off in California with Main Event wins for Josh Grant and Jake Weimer
- 115 **RAGE**
Loads more youth motocross mayhem from our man trackside
- 120 **MAC 211**
Billy bangs bonnets in some wacky races before heading to LA for a New Year's rave up!

Features

- 036 **CRUNCH TIME?**
In this current economic crisis what does the future hold for GP motocross? Adam Wheeler investigates...
- 046 **DAVID VUILLEMIN**
Snake on a Plane! Le Cobra packs his suitcases and flies home after enjoying a successful supercross career Stateside in order to make an all-out attack on the MX1 world championship
- 062 **DAWG'S DVD DUSTDOWN**
Sutty spent all Christmas checking out 16 of the latest off-road DVDs – here are his thoughts on the lot of 'em...
- 066 **FLAT OUT!**
American-style dirt track racing has finally reached the UK and is proving popular as the machines don't cost an arm and a leg but the fun factor's priceless
- 072 **ASHLEY FIOLEK**
Sweet and petite but a badass on a motocross bike – Ashley Fiolek's one of the extreme sports industry's hottest commodities right now!
- 098 **PHOTO FRENZY 2**
FIM Photographer of the Year Sarah Gutierrez shows us a selection of her favourite images from 2008

Reports

- 052 **SHEFFIELD TRIAL**
All the indoor action from Sheffield Arena as 12-time world trials champion Dougie Lampkin fights for victory
- 110 **WILD AND WOOLLY**
Widely regarded as the oldest motocross race in the world, the Wild and Woolly is an annual portion of pain that dates back to 1925 when people really didn't know any better...



CONTENTS FEBRU

COVER: James Stewart throws
out a fat whip at Anaheim 1
© Frank Hoppen

CONTENTS: Cyril Despres guns it hard
on an early stage of the Dakar Rally
© Gustavo Cherro/Red Bull Photofiles

COMMENT

First off all, I guess I should kick off this month's comment by saying a big Happy New Year to all our readers – I hope 2009 brings you everything you want with a little more on top! Like a bit of parsley. Or a cherry...

There are always factors outside our control – there's very little you can do, for instance, about Kev the Rev grabbing a big portion of whiskey throttle and t-boning you in a corner – but, by and large, we do have some control over our own destinies. A few months ago our off-road brain trainer Neil Drew explained how by saying you are going to 'try' to do something you are basically setting yourself up for failure. 'I'll try' somehow legitimises the stuff-up that's just about to follow. I guess the message is pretty clear – don't 'try', just 'do'. Grab your goals by the hairy boys and get going...

This issue marks the eighth anniversary of my stint as editor of DBR which is a pretty scary thought. Sometimes it feels like only yesterday, other times it feels like a lifetime ago. A lot has changed for me in the past eight years – personally and professionally – and there have been some major changes in the sport as well.

February 2001's issue had Tony Marshall on the cover testing the brand new YZ250F which we loudly declared was the future of the 125cc class – and we were right. Eight years on eighth-litre strokers are finished in top level racing – Honda and Kawasaki have stopped making two-smokers full stop and anything else Japanese without valves has hardly benefited from any serious development since about 2005. Unless you count bold new graphics as serious development.

Of course, the reason two-smokers have been gradually phased out is down to environmental issues – nasty dirty things screwing over the ozone layer with their poisonous emissions. So it's pretty ironic that the cleaner, greener four-bangers have brought with them another form of pollution – noise – that's an even bigger threat to off-road sport.

I've always struggled to get my head around the expression 'the more things change, the more they stay the same' but I guess the whole emission versus noise deal sums this up pretty well. Machine development has moved on massively but here we are, eight years down the line, still fighting a rearguard action against those who'd like to ban off-road sport on environmental grounds.

On the whole over the last eight years I've had the bestest time editing DBR – nowadays I seem to spend more and more time trying not to nod off in all the BS meetings I increasingly find myself required to attend but I've made some great friends, been to some great races and had a truly great craic. But the highlight of my time so far (if you don't count drunkenly refusing to hand Luigi Seguy the Chamberlain Trophy back at Namur in '01) happened just a few weeks ago in Monte Carlo.

The FIM awards are just about as prestigious as it gets so when Suttly – who I employed back in 2002 on the strength of an unsolicited freestyle report he'd sent in – was named co-recipient of the Off-Road Journalist of the Year gong I had a major lump in my throat. And when I found out that he was sharing it with Jeff Perrett – who I employed as a columnist on MXUK back in Y2K – I got a major lump in my trousers as well. I'm honestly not blowing my own talent-spotting trumpet here (well, maybe a little), what I'm saying is that I'm dead proud of the pair of ugly feckers...

Sean

With six days down
Marc Coma's setting
the pace in the Dakar

© T Papp/KTM Images



NEWSHAWND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS...

The start of the New Year annually sees the dune busting Dakar rally go off in fine style and the good news is – after the total cancellation of the event in 2008 due to terrorist threats – that this year's South American epic is running flat out! After six days of competition the differing conditions of Argentina and Chile – from the norm in Africa – are throwing up a few surprise results in the bike class. As DBR goes to press it's Spaniard Marc Coma who leads the way ahead of 36-year-old American rider Jonah Street who like Coma is KTM-mounted. Frenchman David Fretigne runs third on his Yamaha while pre-event favourite Cyril Despres is a distant seventh place some 93 minutes behind the leaders after suffering tyre problems early in the rally.

With nine days of competition remaining Stan Watt is first of the Brits in 22nd, just over six minutes ahead of Mick Extance who is 23rd. Aussie-born British resident Si Pavey's currently 42nd while wide-open Welsh Dakar rookie Craig Bounds is just inside the top-100 but picking up the pace as he learns the ropes.

In other international news the big shocker this month is the loss of the South African Grand Prix from the 2009 calendar although both the event organiser and Youthstream are keen to stress that the Nelspruit race will be back on the schedule for 2010. The weak Rand is being blamed for the cut although in this current economic meltdown you can almost guarantee that all the teams and perhaps even Youthstream themselves are breathing a sigh of relief as one of the most expensive to attend GPs bites the dust!

The run up to Christmas was a tough one for Kawasaki who saw their #1 rider in the MX1 class Sebastien Pourcel suffer some serious injuries in an international held on the distant

Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe. It seems that Sebastien suffered quite serious injuries to his shoulder and hip but it's thought that this shouldn't affect his title aspirations too badly.

"The crash was not that big but I landed heavily on my left side and I realised immediately that I was pretty seriously injured," said Seb. "I couldn't move either my left arm or leg and in fact both my shoulder and hip were dislocated. Now I will have to rest for one month before I'll be able to start practising again. I'm still quite confident I'll be ready to win at the first GP though."

Australian lunatic Robbie Maddison did what he set out to do on New Year's Eve and that was to launch himself and his YZ250 on to the top of the Arc de Triomphe – sacre bleu! But rather than leaving rubber dirt bike tracks atop the French nation's premier arch-shaped monument Maddo used an exact replica that can be found inside the grounds of the Paris Las Vegas hotel instead. The 120 feet vertical leap stunned the many thousands of fans who turned up to see in the New Year with Robbie and his pal Rhys Millen who backflipped a pick-up truck – yee haw – earlier in the night at the Red Bull-backed event!

The second part of Robbie's stunt almost ended in disaster though as on the way back down – a terrifying 50 foot drop to a landing ramp – the Aussie missed the sweet spot of the landing. Coming down to earth like a sack of crap, Robbie was lucky only to injure his hand although the bloody bone-deep gash and broken metacarpal probably still smarted somewhat!

A few days after Robbie's momentous leap the AMA supercross season kicked off just 225 short miles away in Anaheim. The season opener is always a sell-out in the Angels Stadium and it was no different this year with over 42,000 fans



© Sutty



© Suzuki-Racing

Dungey – his first and last ride in One Industries kit



© Sutty

Dogie – giving it another go in '09



© Yamaha-Racing

Josh Grant – winner!

witnessing JGRMX Toyota Yamaha's Josh Grant take a surprise win in the Main Event. Grant was undoubtedly helped to his rookie victory by a lap three incident that saw Chad Reed, James Stewart and Kevin Windham all take a soil sample.

The carnage kicked off when Stewart missed a gear on his Yamaha entering a whoop section and defending champ Reed – who was carrying a lot more speed – rammed into the rear of the '07 supercross series winner sending both riders crashing to the ground. While Reed got up and set about charging back to the podium an obviously dazed and confused Bubba pushed his bike directly into the path of Windham who was skimming across the whoops at full speed. While Bubba DNFed, Reed made it back to third behind Grant and Honda's Andrew Short.

In the Lites division the Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki boys dominated with Jake Weimer edging out his team-mate Ryan Morais and Suzuki's Ryan Dungey to take his second ever Main Event victory. Further back in the pack the UK's very own Adam Chatfield scored a cracking 13th place finish on his Riley Racing Honda beating some stiff competition along the way.

Controversy surrounded third place finisher Dungey after the race as his clothing sponsor One Industries immediately terminated a three-year deal the Suzuki star had previously signed. It's rumoured that Dungey wanted out anyway after One Industries signed his long-term enemy Jason Lawrence. In a weird twist of events it transpires that J-Law only signed to One because Fox Racing – who quickly picked up Dungey to wear their kit for the rest of the season soon after the split was officially announced – let him go three weeks prior to the first Anaheim race. Talk about trading places...

In this country one of the first opportunities to see who's wearing what this year will be at the Liverpool Supercross that's set to rock the Echo Arena on January 23/24. With a top line-up of riders set to do battle on a Dirt Wurx-built circuit the Liverpool race – rounds two and three of the four-round British championship – is set to be a scorcher. And as well as two-wheeled youth, amateur and pro action Future West are bring quads indoors too meaning there's gonna be even more thrills, spills and repair bills than normal. Tickets are still on sale for this momentous Mersey moto meltdown through the official online home of British supercross – www.britsxn.net – or by calling 0844 8000 400.

The Sheffield Indoor trial was another great success for British off-road sport as over 6,000 fans packed out the Hallam FM Arena to its rafters for the opening round of the 2009 World Indoor Trials Championship. It's fair to say that most of the crowd were there to cheer on local hero Dougie Lampkin MBE who pulled out all the stops in an effort to take the win. After leading mid-way through the final lap Dougie made a costly mistake in the boxes which saw his hopes of victory evaporate into the arena's extractor fan system – damnit!

There is some good news for fans of the 12-time world title holder though as Dougie's decided to have another full-on assault on the WTC as he chases that elusive 100th victory! And Dougie also plans to enter an extreme enduro or two including WOR Off-Road's The Tough One where he'll be taking on fellow off-road legends David Knight, Paul Edmondson, Geoff Aaron, Taddy Blazusiak, Mike Brown and Geoff Walker in a two-hour race around Nantmawr Quarry. It all goes off on January 17 – for more details about that race log on to www.worevents.com



WHERE'S WILLIAM?

FIND BILLY MAC AND WIN TCX BOOTS

If you spot Billy's head superimposed on someone else's body somewhere in this month's magazine you could find yourself the proud owner of a pair of top-of-the range TCX Pro 2 MX boots courtesy of our reet best buds at Nevis Marketing.

Once you've worked out where's William you need to text the word **DBRWILLY** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **February 12** with the first correct answer chosen at random getting the hoof-holders (don't worry, we'll give the winner a bell to get their size)...

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DECORATED DAWG!

DBR'S DEPUTY EDITOR BAGS FIM TITLE

Feeling a bit fed up that he hadn't been nominated in either the British Motocross Rider or Crasher of the Year categories in the DBR Awards our very own Deputy Dawg went out and bagged a prestigious FIM award instead. Despite being unable to attend the FIM Off-Road Awards ceremony in Monte Carlo our Sutty was reet delighted to learn that he'd won first prize in the Journalist of the Year category.

"Winning the FIM Journalist of the Year award means a lot as I know how many hard working writers and reporters there are in this industry," said Sutty from the comfort of his private yacht in the Caribbean. "Obviously I'd like to thank a few of the people who helped me on my way. Sean Lawless for spotting and nurturing my talent, Mike Harper and Cath Worrall for teaching me the importance of Health and Safety, everyone at Youthstream – in particular Daniele Rizzi – for giving members of the media an excellent environment in which to work and finally Ray Archer who gave me the opportunity to work alongside him last summer."

After a break to soak up the excitement of Christmas Sutty is now back in training with his Speak and Spell and a copy of My First Dictionary as he attempts to go all out to recapture his FIM Journalist of the Year crown in '09...





WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN! **YEAR'S SUPPLY OF ROCKSTAR PLUS A FRIDGE MUST BE WON!**

Feeling sluggish after a little too much partying over Christmas and the New Year? Desperately trying to kick-start your 2009 training regime but lacking a little extra *oomph* to get you going? Well we've got just the prize for you!

Rockstar Energy are one of the main players on the Stateside scene and as sponsors of the Rockstar Makita Suzuki team their delicious and invigorating beverages are endorsed

by the likes of Chad Reed, Mike Alessi and Ryan Dungey. And now you can party like a Rockstar – or a US factory Suzuki pilot for that matter – thanks to our great new comp.

We've teamed up with Rockstar to offer one lucky reader a branded fridge plus a year's supply of the oh-so tasty, luscious liquid. As well as the refrigerator – which cannot be bought in shops – the winner will get

two cases a month of a selection of Original, Juiced, Punched and Sugar Free Rockstar and to be in with a chance all you have to do is tell us which AMA SX champion is sponsored by Rockstar?

Is it: **A)** Chad Reed
B) James Stewart
C) Jason Lawrence
D) Kevin Windham

Once you've got your answer you need to text the word **DBRROCK** followed by a space, your answer (either A, B, C or D), another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **Feb 12** with the first correct answer chosen at random getting the fridge and Rockstar supply.

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© Action Sport Photography

Billy Mac hands David Taylor his 'Against All Odds' award

FIGHTING SPIRIT!

BRAVE DAVE GETS GONG

DBR columnist Billy MacKenzie handed out the silverware at the East Kent club's recent annual presentation where the evening's biggest round of applause was reserved for Senior rider David Taylor who received the 'Against All Odds' trophy.

David broke his back at a meeting in September and was transferred to the spinal injuries unit at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore. Initially he had no feeling in his legs but he has stunned doctors, friends and family with his positive thinking and determination and has made amazing progress. So much so in fact that he was able to walk to the stage to collect his trophy from the factory Honda rider.

Good work David – the word 'inspirational' springs to mind...



GORDON CROCKARD

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

GORDY'S GLAD TO PUT 2008 – AND THE FLU – BEHIND HIM AS HE LAYS THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A SEASON OF SUCCESS

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

It's 2009! Superb news! Thankfully 2008 is finally part of the history files. This year is going to be a walk in the park compared to what I had to contend with last year. Of course the actual task of beating the opposition is never an easy one and that's not really what I was angling at when I said 'a walk in the park'.

I predict '09 will be easier as I know exactly what way to go about approaching it and also I haven't got the element of the unknown to contend with in terms of trying to make a transition from MX to GNCC. I know MX inside out compared to GNCC and I find myself feeling confident when I think about getting in shape for a motocross season. This time last year I was in total tree-dodging mode on a completely unproven bike that was new to the game. So, to me, I think I haven't got so much learning to do. I've just got to get on and...do!

Christmas I was as close to death by flu as I've ever been. Up to then I didn't really think the flu existed and always thought it was just an exaggerated fantasy that people imagined they had when they had a bad cold. Well now I know what the flu actually is and it totally ruined my whole Christmas bonanza. I was all full of motivation to train over the holiday period with lots of cool Chrimbo events on. But not this time for GC! I could barely eat my turkey at my mother's on Christmas Day. I missed the Boxing Day trial. A 15k running event. Mountain bike event etc etc...blah, blah, blah.

Just before I got sick I did manage to venture up to the summit of Slieve Donard for a brutal lung-bursting experience. It is the highest mountain we have here in Northern Ireland and for sure a tight run. The different demands on the human system are pretty vast when you take on such a challenge and I will for sure be including this type of training in my programme from now on. I just wish I'd discovered the value of it years ago. If I think about the amount of training I have put myself through over the 12-year period that I've been a professional sportsman there have been countless seriously painful hours to endure. So new ways to keep it as fun as possible and away from feeling like a monotonous Groundhog Day experience are always welcome and can really be all you need to get you through the winter training slog.

I don't bother with riding the MX bike for practice in the bad weather months of the off-season. Mid-January I start to get anxious and by the end of January I usually try to get out on the machine and work on building up my timing and track speed again. All around me I see people suffering the bad weather to get out on the bike as much as possible. It's natural to be all revved up and keen to get out there with your new bike or team and put the laps in. We all have our own ideas on the best way to approach the season and it's foolish to think that there is one correct way that is the only

way for every rider. In life it's no surprise to hear that we are all different and no two people are the same – well I believe that and I think we should make our own path for wherever we want to go.

This month I will actually be getting some dry conditions to try out the '09 CRF 450 PAR Honda. And it will be in the UK where I will find these dry conditions. Now the catch is that the dry conditions are only dry because they are under the roof of the Liverpool Echo Arena and also the O2 Arena in London. To date I haven't even ridden the new Honda but after my '08 season of riding so many different brands of bike I actually have no fear of adapting to the new steed in a short space of time.

I thought I would have been in Germany this weekend coming for a supercross but some things changed and I haven't gone this time. It suits me okay but I'm missing out on racing the new '09 450 which would have been a nice wee head start for the UK supercross races. I've been capitalising on some spare time and got some home improvements achieved that I've wanted doing for ages but always had other more important priorities.

With the heavy frosts and below zero temperatures for a couple of weeks the ground is amazingly dry and I've been able to get some machines onto our private practice track to have it fully overhauled. It really is getting a total makeover and it's cool to know that by the time it comes round to hit it in better weather the place will be prepared for a lot of riding. Getting any ground work done in January is not very common but the cold weather has kept the rain away.

In the last DBR I wrote that I was experiencing some personal problems in my life. Well, today I had a friend tell me that the word on the street is that I've tried to commit suicide, that I haven't been training, that I spend most of my time in bars and clubs etc etc. I nearly fell over laughing when I heard that. How ridiculous is it that stories can be blown so far out of proportion! You can see how it makes writing anything interesting or 'personal' in this column a bit of a no no. Imagine if my mother had of heard that instead of me? The flu nearly killed me but I wouldn't call that suicide. Some of my training expeditions have nearly killed me and I guess I did that to myself so that's about as close to suicide as I ever got.

So just to update the gossip I'm super, smashing, great! Couldn't be better! Full of beans! Training in my sleep! The only bars I'm near are Renthals. The only clubs I'm near are ACU affiliated. And when I'm singing in the shower I sing 'so, so what, I'm still the Crock Star, I got my Crock moves and I don't need you'!

Gordon Crockard

BIDN'WIN!

SIGNED SWAG AUCTION

Fancy laying your mitts on some super-rare MX swag and at the same time getting that lovely warm feeling in your tummy that comes from knowing you've done something for a very worthy cause? Well now you can...

The Dover-based Motocross Challenge Project – a charity dedicated to helping young people – is auctioning off a signed James Stewart Fox race jersey, a signed Shaun Simpson Team GB MXdN race jersey and three mounted limited edition signed posters of Ryan Villopoto, James Stewart and Timmy Ferry.

All the lots will go live on eBay on January 16 for 10 days and to be in with a chance of owning them all you need to do is search under MXCP and get bidding. All money raised will be ploughed back into the charity.

For more details of the project go online and hook up to mxcp.co.uk

DBR AWARDS 2008!

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The FIM held their swanky end-of-season awards ceremony in Monte Carlo and never ones to look like the poor relations we've now booked the band, ordered the champagne and canapés and scouted out a venue for the DBR Awards bash!

Unfortunately, budget constraints mean that the 'band' is actually Tony the busker (he smells of wee but plays a mean penny whistle), champagne and canapés have been

replaced with White Lightning and Gregg's sausage rolls and the venue is the Winter Gardens car park in downtown Morecambe. But we'll be there and there's even a chance Geoff Walker may turn up n'all.

Anyway, enough beating around the bush. We had a mega response to the awards with readers voting either online or by snail mail and can now reveal your 2008 off-road heroes...

BRITISH OFF-ROAD PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR:

Billy MacKenzie

BEST BRITISH MOTOCROSS RACER:

Tommy Searle

BEST BRITISH AMATEUR MOTOCROSS RACER:

Steven Clarke

BEST BRITISH YOUTH MOTOCROSS RACER:

Max Anstie

BEST INTERNATIONAL MOTOCROSS RACER:

James Stewart

CRASHER OF THE YEAR:

Billy MacKenzie

BEST FEMALE RACER:

Natalie Kane

BEST FMX RIDER:

Nate Adams

BEST INTERNATIONAL OFF-ROAD RACER:

Juha Salminen

BEST BRITISH OFF-ROAD RACER:

David Knight

BEST INTERNATIONAL TRIALS RIDER:

Toni Bou

BEST BRITISH TRIALS RIDER:

Dougie Lampkin

MOST IMPROVED BRITISH OFF-ROAD ATHLETE:

Shaun Simpson

BEST BRITISH EVENT OF 2008:

Motocross of Nations



Billy Mac doubles up in the DBR Awards

BRITISH OFF-ROAD PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

Billy MacKenzie

"I'm really pleased to get this award as a few years ago I was the bad boy of the sport and more people hated me than liked me! So it's really cool to know that people have seen me grow and become the super cool dude I am now!"

"I really enjoy writing my column each month as it's more like my own personal diary and I think people relate to that rather than me banging on about the races all the time – that's what the team race report is for! I love racing and I love the British fans, I just hope I can stay on this year and get a better award for my racing!"

BEST BRITISH TRIALS RIDER

Dougie Lampkin MBE

"It's good to win any award especially one as prestigious as Best British Trials Rider in the DBR awards. It's particularly nice to win a British award seeing as though I haven't ridden in the UK much in 2008 so still to be recognised by the British fans is nice!"

CRASHER OF THE YEAR

Billy MacKenzie

"Well I'm obviously not pumped for this one but I guess I can't argue with it. I think I really consolidated this award after the Nations! I just want everyone to know that I'm working so hard with my trainer Kirk and there's a lot of things we are doing differently compared to last year. I'm so much stronger now and I think that will transfer over to my riding and I'll be able to hold on to my steed when she starts to go buck wild!"

BEST BRITISH YOUTH MOTOCROSS RACER

Max Anstie

"I feel really fortunate to have been given this award as Best British Youth Motocross Racer. Since I started racing the European community has been really supportive of my racing career. I can't thank KTM enough for the opportunity to now represent Great Britain in the United States. They have been exceptionally helpful in getting me to the next level in my racing and I am having a really fun time riding all the tracks in the US.

"I'd also like to thank all my sponsors for their support throughout this last season. Kurt Nicoll and Devin Mitchell at KTM, Alec from Alpinestars, Lil' D from FMF, Airoh Helmets, Brian at Dunlop, Spy Goggles, Kyle at Monster, Motorex, Renthall, Custom Decals and Twin Air. Last but certainly not least I'd like to thank all my friends and fans in England who voted for me! It's much appreciated."

MOST IMPROVED BRITISH OFF-ROAD ATHLETE

Shaun Simpson

"That's mega! I didn't expect that to be honest so thanks to everyone who voted for me. It's a bit of a shock to know people like me so much. Hopefully we can build on this and make even more improvements this year."

BEST BRITISH OFF-ROAD RACER

David Knight

"That's spot on! At last an English magazine has recognised off-road riders! A big thanks to everyone who's voted for me – it's great that this has come from DBR readers..."

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STEPHEN SWORD

READY TO RACE!

AFTER A CHILLED OUT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR THE KTM UK TEAM LEADER CAN'T WAIT TO HIT THE TRACK IN ANGER...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by rayarcher.com

Well this month has been crazy. It started with a presentation – I had done it a few years ago and they asked me back which was cool as they are a nice bunch of people. What was not so cool was I ended up winning three raffle prizes – I'm sure that was not supposed to happen. Next time I won't buy any raffle tickets, that way the club members will win them all!

It was Jodie's birthday so we went to London for the night. We walked around Covent Garden and had some mulled wine – London is such a cool place at Christmas. They have loads of little shops and stalls. One was a guy who looked up surnames so I had mine checked out and it stems from a warrior in Scotland which I was impressed with. From there we went to the theatre to watch Wicked which was really good. When we got back to the hotel we celebrated with a glass of champagne, it was a great night.

I had to go and get a real Christmas tree and had instructions to get a big one so when I was looking I went straight for the seven-footer. It just about fitted in the van but a big tree was what was wanted so that's what I got. There was one problem – it wouldn't fit in the house! So I then had to get my saw and do some DIY and I ended up having to cut loads off the bottom. After all this I got it up feeling pleased with myself when Jodie walked in only to tell me the tree was way too big! Next year she is doing the tree. Thankfully, it ended up looking great after a week as it settled down so I did get an apology.

We decided to host Christmas and Boxing Day at our house as next year we will have a little one so wouldn't want to do it all then. We had all of Jodie's family for a few days so we had a lot to organise. My job was the turkey so on came the cooking channels and I must say I did a bloody good job – I even carved it Jamie Oliver style. Everything was going fine with the cooking until we noticed the cooker was not on! Someone had accidentally hit the power switch just when Jodie's Yorkshires were in so they ended up flat but, hey, that's Christmas!

I then went up to Scotland for the New Year to spend time with my family and it was nice just

to chill and not stress about anything. We went out for some food in the country pubs and also went to the Lake District which in winter is so picturesque. I had never been before so was amazed how big the lakes were. On New Year's Eve we stayed in at my dad's with some family and as Jodie struggles to stay awake now past 9pm we had to have a quiet one. However, it was nice not waking up with a sore head – unlike last year when I was so ill from drinking.

I've been training hard so feel strong ready for next season. I have also started riding and I'm enjoying being on a KTM and can't wait to get racing now. I went up to ride at Jake's track so we could ride together as he's my team-mate for next year. He has a track outside his house and I could not believe what an awesome track it is – the jumps are amazing and you can see it is so well maintained. So hopefully we'll be able to ride there again soon.

I have adapted to the KTM easy and feel comfortable. At the moment I'm riding in England which is going good but we could do with better weather. I am off to Spain with the team at the end of January testing for two weeks so will get a lot of riding in then and make the bike my own ready for racing. I want to go to Belgium riding with Harry Everts also and ride on some sand tracks so I have a busy few months ahead of me.

Jodie is now 24 weeks pregnant and it's such a relief to have got this far. We are going for a 4D scan in a few days so that will be amazing. Oh, it's a little boy by the way so I have painted the nursery blue already as I'll not get the time once racing starts. I really cannot wait for him to arrive although everyone I speak to says to enjoy the peace before it's gone forever! Talking of babies, I just want to mention that DT's wife Gail has given birth to baby April – so pleased for you guys!

Anyway, that's it for another month.

Take care if you're riding as it's so icy out there. And a big Happy New Year – let's have a successful '09!

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THE PHOTOGRAPHER

THE GODFATHER OF MX PHOTOGRAPHY, RAY ARCHER IS THE MAN BEHIND THE CAMERA BEHIND SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC SHOTS OF THE LAST 20 YEARS...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

If you've ever read a motocross mag, looked at an industry website or got a picture signed at one of the rigs then it's pretty much guaranteed that you've seen some of Ray's work. And if you've ever stood in the way of one of his shots then it's also guaranteed that his soft Geordie tones have 'politely' asked you to move out of the way...

DBR: Introduce yourself and tell us what you do.

RA: "My name is Ray Archer and I cover all of the grands prix for the industry as well as handling a lot of the press stuff for a lot of the teams. I don't do a lot direct for the magazines now, although that's how I started..."

DBR: How long have you been shooting motocross?

RA: "Since the late '80s, the end of the Thorpe era – I saw him win his last championship. Just as I was starting out taking snaps I got to see Malherbe and Eric Geboers a couple of times but never De Coster or Sylvain Geboers."

DBR: Do you shoot anything other than motocross?

RA: "I do some street bike stuff. I will be a crew photographer at the launch of a new road bike so there will be myself and five or six journalists and we may go to Mexico or South Africa for three days and I will shoot for about six magazines. I also do a lot of product photography – you know, studio stuff."

DBR: What brand gear do you use?

RA: "Everything is Canon and I have two sets of everything. My 'day' kit that I will carry around at a GP will be two digital bodies (1D MK3s and a 1D MK3), a 300mm prime lens, a 16-35mm lens, a 70-200mm lens, a 1.4 converter, a flashgun and a light meter."

DBR: How many images will you take over a GP weekend?

RA: "Around five to six thousand. If it's cracking weather then more, if it's a blue sky background then I will shoot everybody at different angles, with or without the Red Bull banner etc."

DBR: Do you go to every GP?

RA: "I do every GP and every round of the British championship as well as a couple of the pre-season races."

DBR: Which riders are your favourite to shoot?

RA: "Some of the older school riders. My favourites were people like Tallon Vohland, Pit Beirer, Alex Puzar – someone who would have the throttle on the stop with their elbow up signalling attack mode. Modern day riders it would have to be Cairoli. I did like shooting people like Everts but they are so controlled and smooth it can look like they are standing still – someone like Leok on the other hand is always at full throttle, he can't ride slowly!"

DBR: Which teams are you contracted to?

RA: "Three of the Japanese and one Austrian – that's all I'll say!"

DBR: What will you supply them with?

RA: "As well as the race images we will supply them with a Saturday qualification report, a Sunday race report, some behind the scenes pictures and riders' comments."

DBR: How long does it take you to sort and process a GP's worth of images?

RA: "I have it down to a fine art! I am contracted to supply each team with 20 images but that means going through every one of the thousands that I have shot. I will usually leave the race track at about three o'clock Monday morning."

DBR: How much do you have stored on your hard drive?

RA: "I have filled about 6000 gigabytes at the moment as well as hundreds of CDs. My aim is to also buy a high end scanner and transfer all of my transparencies to digital as well."

DBR: What are your favourite conditions to shoot in?

RA: "I don't mind really. This year we have had a lot of grey skies and rain. In Bellpuig when we were up to our knees in mud in the worst conditions anyone had ever seen I found it quite enjoyable just because it was so unique."

DBR: Has any of your kit been damaged by roost?

RA: "One of my 300mm lenses [£3000 worth] looked like it had been to Afghanistan after a round at Canada Heights. When I

took it to Canon to be repaired they really thought it had been hit with a bullet... Oh and I tripped over in South Africa and did about £3000 worth of damage to the camera!"

DBR: On a team shoot do you get nervous that you might not get 'the' shot?

RA: "Not really, you just have to take control of the situation, a bit like a wedding photographer in that respect."

DBR: What's your opinion of digital versus film?

RA: "In the early stages film was much better but I think that digital has now surpassed where film was. At the beginning we were also hampered by slow internet connections – 20 images could take two-and-a-half hours to upload! There's also the cost – when I was using film I would spend £1000 a month on film and a £1000 on processing!"

DBR: Do you have a favourite photo that you have taken?

RA: "I have two – one of Tortelli jumping down the ski jump at Foxhill and one that I tried to set up. I had seen a picture of De Coster in a book called Images of Motocross where De Coster had his front wheel off the ground with both feet off the pegs and I thought I'd try to recreate it. Chris Benford was riding and we managed to get an almost perfect replica."

DBR: Which is your favourite track to shoot at?

RA: "I have two. There's Maggiora in Italy where they had the Motocross des Nations and Talavera in Spain where it's nice and hilly."

DBR: Which is the most successful shot you've taken as regards usage and payment?

RA: "That was a shot of Ricky Carmichael doing a huge whip at a supercross – it got used all around the world. I think I made about £4000 from that one shot so it was a good earner!"

DBR: What's the most common problem you encounter?

RA: "For me it's going to the same places each year and trying to keep your shots looking different even though you know you can't... And people who get in the way!"

DBR: In your opinion what's the most difficult type of shot to nail?

RA: "Probably trying to get a decent slow shutter speed pan shot. In Moto GP it's easy as the bikes are going so fast, in motocross it's all much slower."

DBR: Other than Suttly and myself, which other motocross photographers do you admire?

RA: "Pat Boulard was my favourite, Jack Burnicle, Plons – there are plenty of people in the press room taking good pictures. You always have to be aware of who's doing what to make sure you keep up."



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Words by JP O'Connell

On the eve of their career-changing moves to America, we hook up with Tyla Rattray and Tommy Searle and discover why tailgating a KTM truck may not be a good idea...

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

TR: "Martin Lawrence."

TS: "The guy who plays Jim in American Pie – Jason Biggs."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

TR: (Laughing) "Probably about five years ago!"

TS: "Definitely not in the last two years – if I ran out then I would but luckily I haven't."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

TR: "No way! I would never be able to do that. I don't think I would be able to put the piston and all the head back on properly!"

TS: "No, although I do know what a valve is!"

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

TR: "No but I'm planning to when I get back home – I want to go hunting for some buck to put on the BBQ."

TS: "No."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

TR: "I've broken maybe three bones but I've damaged a lot of ligaments – it actually takes longer to repair a ligament than a bone."

TS: "Five – my wrist a couple of times, collarbone a couple of times and my arm."

DBR: How many and where are your tattoos?

TR: "No, none – I'm not a tattoo man. I'm anti-tattoo!"

TS: "No and no plans to get any."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

TR: "I wouldn't come into the corner and clean him out – but saying that if it's the last corner for the championship then 100 per cent he's going down!"

TS: "Yeah I probably would!"

DBR: What car do you drive?

TR: "VW Touareg."

TS: "Renault Traffic."

DBR: If money was no object what car would you drive?

TR: "I think it's called the Sport Bentley."

TS: "I don't know, probably a Range Rover – a really tricked up cool one."

DBR: What's your favourite food?

TR: "A good tender South African steak done medium rare, I like it a little red in the middle."

TS: "Quite boring I know but I don't really have a favourite food."

DBR: If you weren't a professional motocrosser what would you be?

TR: "I'd just hang around with my mates doing nothing!"

TS: "Probably building with my dad."

DBR: Which is your favourite motocross track?

TR: "Isle of Wight."

TS: "I really enjoyed racing at Budds Creek."

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?

TR: "Probably going to the Maldives and staying in the best hotel, one that was actually in the sea so you could swim straight out of your room."

TS: "I like a nice hot chilled-out holiday, like Paradise Island in the Bahamas. Lazy in the day with some nice pubs and clubs for the evening."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested and why?

TR: "Yeah once – when I was a kid I was caught shoplifting! Me and my mate were in a shop and I just helped myself to some chocolate and we got busted."

TS: "No, although a couple of weeks ago me and Billy were riding at a quarry that we shouldn't have been and the police turned up threatening to take our bikes away."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

TR: "At Ben Townley's championship party in '04 KTM made this movie – we were loaded and everything came out!"

TS: "Me and my mate Pat once had a competition to see who could stick a pencil the furthest down their [censored – SL] – Pat won but he had to go to hospital. It was chaos!"

DBR: Who is your favourite music band?

TR: "50 Cent at the moment."

TS: "Not sure about a band but at the moment I'm liking the latest Rihanna song, Disturbia."

DBR: How many sit ups can you do?

TR: "As many as you want me to."

TS: "Not many proper ones! Maybe 30 or 40."

DBR: How long would you have to be seeing a girl before you cut the cheese in front of her?

TR: "Just a day."

TS: "Not long I wouldn't have thought!"

DBR: What's your favourite film?

TR: "I'm a comedy guy so something like Euro Trip and American Pie."

TS: "I like funny films that you can watch over and over, I've seen Step Up 2 about five times lately but I can't say that I have a favourite film of all time."

DBR: During your travels where is the craziest place you've had to answer nature's call?

TR: "Driving to a race in '02 the toilet in the van was broke and would empty into the shower so I had to go in a bottle – I filled it up and had to stop while someone emptied it out of the window!"

TS: "We never stop the van so it would have to be in a bottle – don't help yourself to a drink from the KTM awning!"

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

TR: "I'm pretty scared of sharks and snakes."

TS: "I don't like heights so much – if I had to climb a really high ladder and then get off onto a little platform I'd really not enjoy it!"

DBR: What's the most embarrassing article of clothing you've owned?

TR: "I really can't think of anything that bad."

TS: "There's not so much – just one thing as a whole load! Hang on, I do have a green Borat thong..."

DBR: Can you cook and if so what's your signature dish?

TR: "Of course! I'm a really good cook – I like to rustle up toast and an egg!"

TS: "I'm okay – I usually cook rice, chicken and broccoli."

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

TR: "My motocross bike."

TS: "I haven't really got that much stuff so I haven't got anything that I really couldn't bear to lose."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

TR: "Doesn't really bother me, if a chicks hot then she's hot."

TS: "Brunette."

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?

TR: "Probably Isle of Wight 2004 when I had a battle with Ben Townley."

TS: "Locket this year – I had a really good race with Tyla and enjoyed myself."

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight and if so did you win?

TR: "I had a few when I was at school. As for winning them – well of course!"

TS: "The morning after Pat got back from the hospital he tried to say I made him do the thing with the pencil and it ended in a brawl!"

DBR: How fast can you down a pint?

TR: "I don't know, I've never tried that – I can down a Vodka and Red Bull very fast though."

TS: "I don't even think I've ever drunk a whole pint – just little girls' drinks!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

TR: "They are probably equal – hang on, I'll change that. Winning is better – no, wait, I'll say they are the same!"

TS: (Laughing) "Whatever I say isn't going to be right! If I say it is Harriet will get the hump, if I say it isn't then I'll probably get the p**s ripped out of me by everyone else!"

DBR: You obviously have lots of fans who look up to you but who is your sporting hero?

TR: "Lance Armstrong."

TS: "Probably Carmichael."



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BARELY HAVE THE PARTY STREAMERS SETTLED ON 2008 AND THE 2009 SEASON IS UP AND RUNNING IN THE EMERALD ISLE...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

The official 2009 off-road season kicked off in fine style on New Year's Day and while many of you were having fun and taking part in the Knock MCC's cross country team event at the famous Bells Hill motocross track, deep in the outback of Dromore I was bashing one out – my latest Blarney, I mean...

Fortunately, DBR pay triple time-and-a-half for working New Year's Day – although that's not the real reason I'm forsaking the Havana Club in favour of getting my column in early. Oh no, screw Sean, Sutty and the designer bloke with the bum chin – I'm spending January 1 chained to my PC so I can board a freedom bird tomorrow morning that will hopefully stay in the air for the appropriate length of time to see me land in a faraway country that is baking in sunshine and has cheap booze!

A clue to just where I will be travelling is that I will take in a day at the renowned MX365 facility during my stay. I was seriously thinking about tapping Mr Lawless for a contribution towards my trip as there will be an Irish rider or two training at the same venue during the same week I will be there (and then you thankfully thought again, eh Stevie? – SL).

Okay, back to the Knock club's New Year's Day gig! A spiced up entry of contenders from Moto GP (Eugene Laverty), WSB (Jonathan Rea) and the British rally championships (Philip Morrow) all got down and dirty during the three-hour team marathon. And the winning team? Current British enduro champ Philip McLaughlin opted to go solo and the TM factory rider was in fine form for three hours, two minutes and 11 seconds to take the win.

Two laps behind the one-man army were Team Turkey – David McCamley and Andy Gould – who finished in a remarkable second position with the final podium spot going to the Party Crew of Ryan Shanley, Davy Williamson and Jason Garrett.

Some 68 teams entered with Natalie Kane, Stephen Russell, Brian Steele and Graeme Irwin all embracing the New Year in the best way possible by getting mucky with their mates! Transponders were used for the first time ever which made the time keeping job a pleasure for those entrusted with the scores on the doors.

A special 'cheers' must go out to Andrew Huddleson who got the commentator's job – all three hours of it! Sore throat I bet! Year on year the popularity of this Knock club extravaganza grows in stature and, judging by the quality of entrants it attracts, will continue to go from strength to strength.

Thanks to majority agreement by our motorcycle clubs, 2009 will see the MRA race format return to two motos per class with A, B and C grade riders all being catered for during the Ulster Premier championship day. The talk is of two 25-minute motos for the grade A guys which will take the actual track time to nearer 30 minutes per race – should make the final third of each moto interesting. Fitness will come into play so get back to the gym boys!

A double blow was dealt to Phil McCullough's Moto One '09 plans recently. Firstly Aston Bird, who Big Phil had tagged to ride the British MX1 championship for his Suzuki-mounted outfit, signed a deal to go enduro racing instead. Then newly-crowned Irish/Ulster MX2 champion Graeme Irwin announced his intention to race

with Roger Magee's KTM UK team for 2009.

I know that initially, as a team manager, Philip will be disappointed as he puts 100 per cent commitment into going racing and had worked well with the youngster over the past two seasons. But when the dust settles McCullough will be excited for Graeme as Phil remembers only too well what it's like to be a budding

can keep his head focused and feet on the ground he may just have a real chance at making the cut in a couple of years.

The Cookstown club enjoyed hosting both youth and adult race day on December 27 and the weather was kind to all that managed to muster the enthusiasm to burn off some Christmas turkey calories.



Graeme Irwin's picked up a ride with KTM UK for 2009

teenage racer. He also had many an opportunity to live and race in the UK full time – I know to this day he wishes he could have explored a few more avenues at the beginning of his well documented racing career.

For Graeme I think this is a fantastic opportunity for one of the brightest prospects to come out of Ireland since GC. The pedigree and commitment in the KTM UK stable is only matched by recent achievements at the pinnacle of our sport attained by a previous KTM UK pupil. Grazing in the same pastures as Swordy will be advantageous to Graeme in every possible way and Roger has the structure in place to nurture this raw talent. If young Irwin

Everybody had a great day out in the deep sand at the popular Porters Pit venue with the focus point being Tommy Merton going green.

Tommy had a turbulent and injury-plagued '08 so it was good to see the multi-time Ulster motocross champ looking at home on the KX450, supplied by Norman Watt Motorcycles. A return to the front at local races for both Tommy and Kawasaki may just be on the cards if the Comber lad can find the mindset that made him winner in the past.

Tune in next month for full team line-ups and, hopefully, an answer to the big question – how many races will GC and Barty ride in Ireland in '09?

Stevie



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SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST!

WITH A GLOBAL MELTDOWN PREDICTED ONLY THE STRONG WILL SURVIVE – AND THE WEC IS A MEAN N' LEAN FIGHTING MACHINE...

Words & photo by Jonty Edmunds

One thing that's seemingly impossible to do as the New Year rolls around is open a newspaper, listen to the radio or watch TV without being constantly reminded about the global economic slowdown – the dreaded credit crunch! With firms seemingly lining up one after another to publicly proclaim that they're going under, positive news in '09 is – so far – hard to come across.

The knock-on effect of the world running out of money has been bad news for a lot of people. Those with pensions have been hit hard, house prices have dropped significantly, redundancies are on the rise and the once mighty pound is not quite as mighty as it once was. The economic slowdown is also anything but good news for anyone involved in motorsport.

So how well placed is the World Enduro Championship to weather the storm of global financial instability? Like all forms of motorsport its teams, its riders and its series promoter rely heavily on sponsorship money to get to the races, earn their living and do their jobs. And as most everyone is aware when the economy slips sales drop and profits take a hit so money spent on sponsorship is quickly reduced.

Companies pump money into sport in the form of sponsorship for a number of reasons. Because it is a sound way of increasing awareness of their products and services. To reduce their end-of-year tax bill. Because association with the world's best teams and, in the case of enduro, riders lends credibility to a brand which increases confidence and sales. And last – but by no means least – because

some companies have a passion for sport and simply want to be involved. No matter what the reason, if the money's no longer there to be spent then it simply doesn't get, er, spent...

If the mainstream media are to be believed Honda's unexpected and sudden withdrawal from Formula One will soon be followed by more teams deciding that they can't afford to go on – and not just in F1. As for what happens in F1, well, despite the newspapers reckoning that it indicates what's to come for other motorsport championships it doesn't actually tell us anything apart from what's going on in F1.

The WEC is not F1. The World Enduro Championship, in the great scheme of things, is a modestly-sized championship that will never dominate headlines in national newspapers but neither is it a wasteful championship. One of the problems facing F1 and Moto GP is the fact that without money – huge amounts of money – teams can expect very little in the way of success. To compete at the top it's all spend, spend, spend.

Any championship that has no true 'factory' bikes – unlike 'unlimited' championships like F1 and Moto GP – will always be at an advantage when finances dry up. A lightly modified bike costing less than 10,000 Euros is good enough to ensure podium results in the WEC while teams operate, as they always have done, on a nucleus of one team manager and a handful of mechanics and technicians. There is no unnecessary expenditure. There is no waste.

Teams in the WEC have never had large amounts of money at their disposal and while

some will undoubtedly find it harder scraping together the required funds to compete in this year's eight-round championship the amounts of money that do need to be raised are, in comparison to other forms of motorsport, not unachievable.

The championship itself isn't wasteful. There is one overseas event in Mexico – which in light of things most teams would probably say is a little unnecessary – but aside from that it remains within Europe. Which means it also remains a relatively cheap series. Add to that the fact that teams don't need to pay exorbitant amounts of money to the promoter simply to register their intent to compete and it's easy to see that the WEC doesn't need to adopt drastic measures to cut costs.

The self-preservation of the WEC is what needs to happen in the next few years until the economy starts to strengthen again. Making the series a Europe-only affair once again will help, as will running all events two at a time on consecutive weekends in neighbouring countries. Even if some teams did opt out of the championship for a year or two the WEC would still be a more competitive – and much less one-sided – series in terms of the number of competing teams than most any other motorcycle championship.

Having long been the poor relation in the off-road motorcycling family the WEC has grown used to surviving on what is, relatively speaking, not a lot. Hopefully, that'll be enough to protect the WEC from the worst the economic slowdown has to offer...

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LATE STARTER

Firstly I would like to thank you for consistently supplying a great magazine – one that I have been reading for many years. I have been hooked on motocross since I was a wee lad but until now I was never able to really get into the scene, mainly because my parents considered it too dangerous.

I've never lost interest or ambition to get into motocross and most of that is thanks to your magazine keeping me hooked over all these years. I am now 27 years old and finally able to pursue my interest but I have growing concerns regarding my ability in the sport.

I am no longer a fearless youngster and wonder whether I will still have the confidence or the bottle to attack a track, not to mention the many jumps that I may find myself approaching. I live in Northampton and I am aware of the various clubs and tracks but I am hesitant to start here without having the confidence.

I wondered whether I could kindly ask for your advice on the most efficient way to build my confidence up before I rush in and be the guy that's getting in people's way on a track?

Simon, Northampton

*A certain member of the DBR team has gone from being young, dumb and full of vrum to a s**t-scared almost 40-year-old and his advice is crack right on and see what happens – after all, what have you got to lose? Luckily for you there's a brilliant club in your area – Northampton MCC – so get in touch with F-Law at fraser@idology.co.uk for some sound advice and encouragement.*

HEAR 'ERE

Firstly your magazine is wicked – me and my dad get it every month. In the July issue there was some lovely 222 cuffie headphones and I was wondering if there was anywhere I could buy them from in England. I have tried their website but didn't understand it! Please can you help?

Harry, Andover

We're struggling on this one Harry – have you tried searching Italian eBay and using an internet language translation site? Five minutes online came up with this www.ciao.it/srlq-lovemytime – so crack on and get searching!



WASHED UP

I just got my first bike (at age 17) which I've yearned after for years. Me and my dad bought it together and it's been impossible to separate me from it since – the only problem is I only get about half-an-hour of riding in each night. I even took half-a-day off school the other day to ride it but I've been waiting for the weekend so I can go out with my friend and really find out what it's like.

It's only a 125 but it's more than fast enough for me at the moment, especially as the previous owner – who may I add was a great guy – had race-tuned it with a reed valve system among other things. The only problem is I'm still trying to get used to it and because it's winter every time I take it out it gets covered in crap from the farm and fields – I clean it every time but it must take me half-an-hour each time at least!

It's a right pain and I never seem to get much riding time – do others ride in the winter and how do they overcome the mud and crap that seems to cover the bike? And seeing as it's my first bike I'm always afraid that I shouldn't be getting parts wet when I'm cleaning it! Can you give me some advice on what parts I can and can't get wet!

Tom, Stratford-Upon-Avon

PS I think your reviews and articles are brilliant – they really help me keep up to date with all the latest news.

Good timing Tom – in this very issue there's a Geoff Walker masterclass on prepping your bike for winter riding so turn to pages 86-89 for your essential guide. And as your letter's made it into these 'ere pages we'll also send you some Muc-Off to keep your steed shiny and cut down on cleaning time – just don't power wash bits like your carb, air-filter or owt with bearings...

DISCO DIVA!

Happy New Year and thanks to all at DBR for the great reading over 2008 and some good advice – I hope 2009 will be just as good!

Just a little rant also – what the hell is going on with all the racewear at the moment? It's shocking! All I want is just a blue and white kit with a simple design, not all this flower power '70s wacky stuff! What are all the designers smoking?

Rant over and keep up the great mag!
Ian, Trowbridge

There is some seriously disco stuff on the market at the moment Ian but you can still get some fairly sedate kit if you look hard enough – off the top of our heads we're thinking MSR and Answer (apico.co.uk) and Thor (ultimatepursuits.co.uk).

BRIGHT SPARK!

After hearing about the KTM electric bike that is being developed I was excited to hear more about what the sport may end up coming to. So as you can guess I was excited to read the Electric Shock article in the December issue of DBR. The article was great as I wanted to know how the bike would handle, the power delivery etc and your test told me all that I wanted to know so thanks DBR!

I'd also like to thank MD Racing products for my new sponsorship offer and Buffwear for their continuing support.

Happy New Year everyone!

Casey, Somerset

We're glad you liked Tony Marshall's test Casey. Electric motors could very well be the future of our sport but there's still a long way to go before they can match the performance of the internal combustion engine...



Tony Marshall gives the Quantya some beans

STICK-UP!

I'm looking for a set of graphics that Kevin Windham used in the 1999 season. Do you know where I could get a set of them?

I'm desperate!

Dan, Cloyne

We can't think of anywhere you'll get a set of factory Honda graphics from '99 Dan but if you've got some pics of K-Dub's red rooster then why not get them custom-made. Check out somewhere like www.evoke-concepts.com for more info...



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk

All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.

Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of Etnies Cinch shoes.





DIADORA MX5 PRO BOOT

Diadora motocross boots are something of a hidden treasure as not all that many people know that the Italian footwear giants even produce dirt clogs. Imported into the UK by those scurvy currs at Apico, these MX5s are not only a nice looking bit of kit but have been well tried and tested by top riders like the Relentless Suzuki squad too scoring top marks for durability and fit!

Price: £189.99
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 0870 777 9201

INNOVA MX TYRES

This all-new great value range of Innova motocross tyres is now available and exclusively distributed in the UK by Apico. Four tread patterns are available making them perfect for the cash strapped racer or practice track warrior.

Price: Front from £29.99 Rear from £34.99
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 0870 777 9201



FOX RACING PLATINUM RACEWEAR

The Platinum line sets a new performance standard. Its pant delivers exclusive quad-stretch rear gusset construction, an intensely engineered active stretch knee and specific flex panels to put you in the Competitive Rider Attack Position easier than ever. The jersey is the ultimate in articulation and movement through the aggressive use of custom tailored, cut and sewn multi-panels, common sense ventilation fabrics and rider-correct forming. It's race designed, race proven and race ready.

Price: Gloves £30 Jersey £40 Pants £135
Supplier: foxracing.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



FOX RACING WOMEN'S V2 HELMET

Fox were one of the first motocross clothing companies to embrace women's motocross fully and offer a specific riding line designed for folks of the female persuasion – nice one dudes! And continuing with their quest to make the perfect fit kit for racing chicks, Fox have created this female specific V2 lid that looks absolutely stunning in black and pink. As well as coming in a colour that's guaranteed to make the boys wink this V2 lid is also super-safe, well-vented, hi-tech and great looking too and the best bit's the bargain price.

Price: £120
Supplier: foxracing.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



ALPINESTARS BIONIC KNEE GUARDS

When doing dangerous stuff like riding dirt bikes or messing with the mafia wearing quality knee protection is essential if you wanna enjoy walking unaided for the rest of your life. That's where a sweet pair of these sub-50 bones Alpinestars bionic knee guards come in because although they can't guarantee that you won't hurt your leg joints while wearing them they will stop a plethora of pain.

Price: £49.95
Supplier: freestylextreme.com
Contact: 0117 967 2240



SHIFT RACING COMBAT BOOT

In the not so distant past brand new pairs of sub-£100 boots were absolutely crap – they looked naff and didn't last so long in the heat of battle either. But now it's possible to get a cracking pair of genuinely dirt bike worthy hoof-warmers for less than a hundred bones and still have change left over for a bag o' chips and a bus ride home afterwards.

Take these Shift Combat boots for instance that are made from full-grain leather and have all the technological features – steel toe plate, Achilles flex zone, shock absorbing padding and more – you'd expect to see on a pair of boots that cost twice the price. Fantastical!

Price: Adult £95 Kids £75
Supplier: shifteurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6300

ALPINESTARS CHARGER RACEWEAR

Fresh in at Freestylextreme.com this month is this all-new Alpinestars Charger racewear that comes in a whole host of colours and sizes to suit almost every size of human being. Check it out now online at freestylextreme.com!

Price: Pants £94.95 Jersey £29.95 Gloves £21.95
Supplier: freestylextreme.com
Contact: 0117 967 2240



ATHENA FORGED PISTONS

Athena has developed a wide range of forged pistons specifically for the off-road market. Manufactured using revolutionary technology, Athena forged pistons offer the best solution in terms of performance and reliability.

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Price: various
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 0870 777 9201



SHIFT RACING FLAK JACKET AND WOODY PANTS

Last time I looked outside the window it was chuffing cold and chuffing wet too which means that if you haven't got some top winter riding kit like this Shift Flak Jacket and Woody – huh-huh hu huh-huh huh-huh, woody – pants going out and riding your dirt bike is a mahoosive no-diddy-no-no unless you're some kind of dirt biking robot sent back through time to do something and stuff. So I guess my point is that if you fancy taking your dirt-cycle for a spin in this most inclement weather and you're not a cyborg then hook yourself up with this 'ere Shift gear that's pretty much guaranteed to keep your torso toasty no matter how wet and wild it is.

Price: Jacket £125 Pants £100
Supplier: shifteurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6300





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BALLS OF STEEL!

Jumping a dirt bike 120 feet directly upwards so you can land safely on the roof of an exact replica of the Arc de Triomphe is one hell of a way to let the New Year in with a bang. But that's exactly what Aussie madman Robbie Maddison did during an event billed as the Red Bull Experiment in Las Vegas! If you want to see more from this event head online to dirtbikerider.com where you'll find some awesome footage of Maddo's craziest ever leap!





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special feature

GP MX in 2008 – but what
will it look like in 2009
and, for that matter, 2010?



CRUNCH



H T I M E ?

WITH THE MOTORSPORT COMMUNITY HARSHLY AFFECTED BY THE CREDIT CRUNCH, WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE CURRENT STATE OF GP MOTOCROSS WITH EXCLUSIVE WORDS FROM SOME OF THE SPORT'S MAIN MOVERS AND SHAKERS...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by rayarcher.com



"It is hard to say what will happen, we all understand the effect of this crisis will be longer than one year. We will have to experience and learn the behaviour of the global consumer. TEKA has become a stronger and more important partner for the MX1 team and it looks as though the TV activities by Youthstream are paying off in better sponsorship from outside the motorcycle business."

Teka Team Suzuki owner Sylvain Geboers

Within the global motorsport industry costs are being slashed. Manufacturers' priorities now have less to do with titles and more to do with clearing the stockroom of unsold units, fighting falling profits through currency craziness and coping with the fall-out of consumer belt-tightening. The big question is how this will have a bearing on world championship MX?

For all the saving to rescue millions wiped off company books through a lofty Yen, grey imports and a suicidal dollar, will the average race fan notice much of a difference? All indications are that 2009 will be 'business as usual' – at least for the first part of the season – but scratch the surface and you'll find brands attempting to shave budget wherever possible. And teams are being affected by this as well as potentially reduced support from sponsors and technical partners.

So why all the cut-backs? Well, the statistics do not make for pretty reading. Total production of motorcycles in Japan has now reached its lowest point since 1962. From January to June

this year just over half-a-million motorcycles were made in Japan, a drop of more than 30 per cent compared to 2007. More crucially Japan – the second largest economy in the world and the biggest in Asia – has seen the Yen reach its highest mark in almost 15 years and as of late December analysts were predicting more gloom for the market until the beginning of 2010. If there are notable signs of belt-tightening in 2009 then the following season could be even worse. There are too many unsold bikes, little profit and a harsh roll-over of consequence that deals a sour lick to the racing community – the proverbial 'shop window' for products.

The gravity of the situation is almost unquantifiable concerning Japanese brands. In the past shortfalls in some markets could be made up with good sales in other areas but with the turmoil now on a global scale sources inside some factories believe that whole racing programmes are under review and under threat.

The Yen may be one of the factors crippling the Japanese but in Europe the scene is not much rosier. KTM in November predicted a

10 per cent decrease in production for 2008/9. In the same report it is stated that their EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Tax) was down almost 50 per cent despite only a seven per cent drop in sales with the dollar exchange rate undoing any good work.

The shape of the 2009 motocross world championship was largely cemented before the impact of the 2008 motorcycle sales season had struck. Firms are trying to see where they can save now but for the most part '09 racing programmes are already in place.

Since Youthstream assumed control of the world championship in 2004 and created the MX1 and MX2 classes their efforts with the facelift of the sport have been positive – so much so that the MXdN is now a shining beacon of a world-class off-road motorcycle meeting. Their statistics unsurprisingly show a rise in TV and circuit spectators year upon year. In '04 there was a potential 330 million audience thanks to 204 hours of live TV coverage and 307,800 people through the turnstiles. In 2008 the figures had risen to a potential 848 million via



"The problem is that we don't know where the whole world will be in a couple of months and I think nobody can give a long-term guarantee at this moment. Motocross is practically the showcase for KTM's 'ready to race' products. Even if we are also facing difficult moments in the market we have not reduced dramatically our motocross budget."
 KTM Off-road Sport Director **Pit Beirer**

TV with 1200 hours of coverage and 461,500 coming to the tracks.

"TV coverage is growing and crowds are generally good so we get to show off our best riders and race machines in a good way," says Kawasaki European Race Planning Manager Steve Guttridge. "The world championship has status and so more overseas countries are joining the calendar which adds to its excitement factor and general credibility of the series."

Factory Yamaha rider Josh Coppins also points to other factors. "I think we have a lot to offer the outside world – sure we are not Formula 1 but we don't pretend to be and nor do we cost the same for investors. It's obvious that the world is in difficult times financially right now but value for money I think we offer good coverage and at the same time great racing.

"We are travelling to more countries and some teams and people see this as bad – mostly because of the expense – but we are a world championship, not European. I think coming from New Zealand helps me see that we need to be racing all over the world. Every year there are

more and more young, fast kids popping up into GPs and this is nice to see."

Despite the relatively widespread view that the world championship is the place to be, the latest moves by teams and companies with a commercial interest in the sport leaves the ground a little unsteady. Or does it?

"I believe that when you make good work on a solid base then it will stay," says Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo, an Italian with more than 25 years experience of promoting motocross races. "What we have managed to build up is fantastic and nothing will take it away, not even the economical crisis. We believe that the good, over time, will always win.

"I don't believe that there will be any job problems in the GP world. We have increased our staff by 10 people. Maybe some companies will use the excuse of this crisis to fire some people who were not the best for them and others may use this moment as an excuse to restructure their company and cut dried branches. I believe that we will occupy more TV space left available from the major sports. I am

very proud to say that despite this difficult moment we have not lost any sponsors and we have three new international brands joining us as major sponsors of the 2009 FIM Motocross World Championship."

Youthstream claim more than 50 per cent of GP events now have government backing and at the heart of the paddock is a presence from almost 10 manufacturers. The big question for the future and credibility of this championship concerns the depth of commitment by the Japanese that supply a large majority of the motorcycles – works and supported – on the gate, especially in the premier MX1 category.

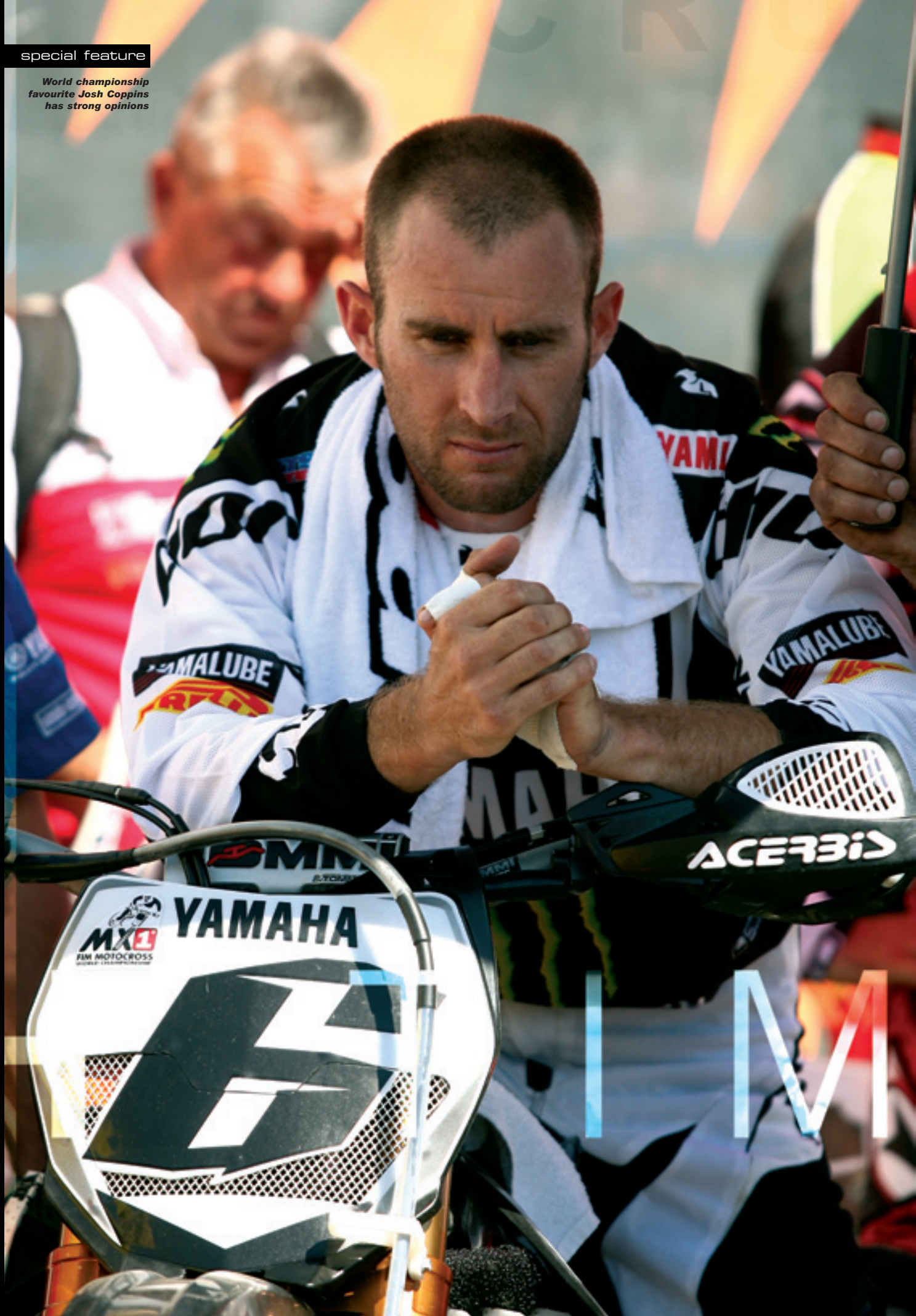
"The manufacturers need our sport to promote their brands and develop their products – they might decrease their budget but they will be present," asserts Luongo. "We have the starting grid full and very long waiting lists for every championship."

Youthstream took new steps midway through 2008 – before the crunch really bit – to lift the championship to the next level. The teams would face 10,000 Euro fees per rider and



special feature

*World championship
favourite Josh Coppins
has strong opinions*





"It is difficult to make a structural new approach for the 2009 season. We are still considering how to find further cost reduction. As the problems generally started after the sales season, the big hit will come. With the negative development of the Yen/Euro exchange all Japanese manufacturers are hit extra hard."
Racing Division Manager Yamaha Motor Europe **Laurens KleinKoerkamp**

TAKING STOCK!

IS A PRODUCTION RULE VIABLE?

To make racing cheaper, application of a new set of rules could be made. Formula One and MotoGP are already adopting this tack and there is a real chance that motocross could follow suit with production-based status – an idea that was already raised by the FIM mid-season in 2008 and another paddock-splitting topic.

"FIM and Youthstream are ready and prepared," says FIM CMS President Dr Wolfgang Srb. "I have asked the manufacturers in the latest meeting of the Motocross Strategic Committee last September about their position on this issue. They all have said that they want to continue with prototypes but without an escalation of costs due to the use of electronics [traction control etc]. We have scheduled the next meeting for February – let's see their position then."

"This is delicate as it mainly concerns the FIM," reckons Giuseppe Luongo. "Sure the costs of a true standard machine can be better for the participants and would sensibly reduce the costs for the teams but I'm not sure the bike manufacturers, accessory manufacturers or the suspension factories see it in the same way." And he's right...

"This would eliminate the involvement of manufacturers and in that case the AMA championship is sufficient, there is no need for an extra championship," stresses Sylvain Geboers. "I don't think that's happening," comments Steve Guttridge, "it doesn't make sense for our development programme. It would reduce our reason to go racing at the top level and part of the excitement to visit the GPs and see the exclusive factory machinery." "I believe that a factory bike brings a big contribution to the series in terms of prestige and interest of the spectators," adds Lorenzo Resta.

"Of course the costs go up but it is in the spirit of the competition to use the best technology available."

"This would be a shame," says Josh Coppins. "A lot of our spectators come to see the factory bikes as well as good racing – they don't want to come and look at the bike they can buy in their local shop! Also my job as a rider is to try and win and develop a better bike for Yamaha. I can do this by using factory parts and giving feedback but if we ride production bikes it limits my job a little."

Only KTM – who like Honda are full-speed ahead with plans for a zero emission motorcycle – seem warm to the plan. "Why not?" says Pit Beirer. "It would not change the racing and the public would see the same show on the track. It would save money and we are open to discuss this point."

It is hard to draw any summaries. Depending on the philosophy and attitude of different parties the coming years either look murky or represent something of a challenge. However, everyone seems to agree that the seasons ahead will not be easy.

"I think the target for the next two years must be to keep the sport on the already good level," says Beirer. "I think that with the Under 23 rule coming in 2010 for MX2, MX1 will stamp its mark as a premier class again," says Guttridge. "Factory rides will become more important and TV focus will be on those factory stars so I have no fears regarding 'top level' status – it's the level below that I'm worried about."

"Many team owners and team staff are passionate about motocross and they will enter the championship because it is what they want to do, it is their life," reckons Laurens KleinKoerkamp. "I am worried that

good level teams and riders will not be able to afford to enter all rounds and there will be financial troubles. This affects the sporting principle behind the championship of having the best riders fighting for points at every race."

"The FIM has a huge task to fulfil," says Geboers. "They need to make rules for worldwide noise control and they have to keep the sport attractive for the riders, teams and manufacturers. Five years from now we will be racing with quiet bikes and hopefully all teams may have strong sponsors."

"My fear is that average riders will buy their way into GPs and riders without the money will not make it even if they are better," says Coppins. "The good ones will always rise up but to make a good race we need depth."

"I am not afraid of the future," claims Srb. "The motocross world championship was, is and will always be the number one MX series of the world with the best riders, tracks and organisers."

"If serious danger is near Youthstream will take the necessary steps to preserve the value of the FIM Motocross World Championship," asserts Luongo. "In my 25 years in motocross I have seen good moments and difficult moments and frankly my answer is the same as always – we have to dream, believe and work hard. Why have many other promoters who have tried to do my job failed? It's because they want to make lots of money and fast. It doesn't work like that – you have to believe and you have to be ready to go over the many difficult times which will undoubtedly fall upon you."

"I hope this crisis will not kill what was built up with hard work over years," adds Beirer. "A crisis can also be a chance – never give up."

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"Even though Honda Europe has its wishes, decisions are made in conjunction with Japan and we have seen this with the AMA Superbike withdrawal – just because motocross does not cost as much as other disciplines does not mean that it is safe from any cut-backs."
Honda Europe Off-Road Motorsport Co-ordinator **Roger Harvey**



"It depends on so many factors in the real world but normally after a good year with working with our three new teams we should be in a good position to build it bigger again for 2010. So far in terms of motocross sales we are still doing very well."
Kawasaki European Race Planning Manager **Steve Guttridge**

see the exclusion of funding for overseas races. In return guaranteed TV time that can be used to source sponsors and improved infrastructure at the tracks with refined paddocks and a new double-tiered pitlane were offered as compensation.

The demands on the teams were already controversial in some quarters but now hit home extra hard...

"I didn't understand it," says Guttridge. "Why increase the price to attend in a time when all teams – even factory-based – would struggle to meet the criteria?" "It is unfair because the athlete has to pay to perform and attract the public. How can we motivate the parents permitting their children to race motocross?" comments Teka Team Suzuki owner Sylvain Geboers. "We could not believe it," adds Laurens KleinKoerkamp, Racing Division Manager for Yamaha Motor Europe. "We were astonished!" says Martin Honda Sporting Director Lorenzo Resta. "It seemed a counter-productive choice. In F1 they are thinking to help teams for overseas races, in MotoGP they already do it. We are proud to race all over the world but it is very expensive. It will only serve to underline the difference between big and small teams and to make a natural selection.

To have a good championship we need the contributions of all – official and private."

"I was a little nervous about this because I think as a rider I could see tough times were coming," Coppins confesses. "I was – and still am – worried that good teams will go and not be replaced by other good teams. I understand what Youthstream are trying to do but unfortunately it didn't come at the best time. I am nervous we will not fill the startline at many races and the last 10 riders will be below average."

In a way the real test as to the health of the series will be witnessed at the final two races of the year in Brazil and the USA when the size of the entry in the gate will be telling. Even the commitment from the media will be tested with an extended calendar.

"I think that Youthstream is a very competent promoter with many years of experience and have taken the sport in a very positive direction but I hope that they are equally able to adapt quickly to market forces such as this worldwide recession," says International Motocross Press Association President Ray Archer. "I think in recent years the manufacturers have enjoyed unprecedented coverage in the specialised print media due to increased popularity of the sport. The media have used to full effect the industry

press services but there will be more cut-backs – the recent Honda F1 racing cuts are only the tip of the iceberg. The sad reality is that all motorsports and all those involved will suffer in the next few years."

Whether the teams should be receiving more help for providing the 'cast' is perhaps the most hotly debated subject in the paddock. "I think the teams should be getting a certain contribution for making the show and providing the actors for it," believes KleinKoerkamp. "A top team has to pay between 16,000 to 22,000 Euros per overseas event for equipment transportation, flights etc. In general this had already caused big concern but with the economical state now from the last few months the budget situation has become critical."

"GPs are already on a very high level, they just need tuning in every department with special attention to the details," says Luongo by way of justification. "Our work is not to assist teams or others, it is to create the solid base and the tools for everyone to grow with and it would be a big mistake to assist. The strong ones, the serious ones, the workers and the professional ones will survive and they will become stronger after the crisis, the others will disappear – this is the law of our world. You will see that after this period the professional teams will become stronger."

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profile

The Bercy SX gave David valuable development time on his Bud Racing KX-F



PRODIGAL

HE'S BEEN STATESIDE FOR THE LAST NINE YEARS BUT NOW DAVID VUILLEMIN'S BACK BLAZING THE GP TRAIL AND LOOKING TO TAKE CARE OF SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

After nine years in the States the Cobra – aka DV12 – is back in Europe. And he's ready to strike!

It's a fair bet that many readers don't even know that the 6ft 4ins French star from the small town of Berre l'Etang in the same Provencal mountain range as Jean-Michel Bayle and les freres Pourcel has ever ridden anything else other than supercross. After all his career records are impressive...

World champion in 1999, twice a close second to Jeremy McGrath in 2000 and 2002 in

the AMA series, a total of 11 wins in the US arenas, twice European 125 champ, never headed in three attempts at the Stade de France, twice Prince and four times King of Bercy, going unbeaten through the weekend twice with opposition like McGrath. The list is simply never-ending and made him the darling of the French crowds as well as the most popular Frenchman ever with the US public.

I first got talking to David in the car park at the Geneva SX back in December 1995, a couple of weeks after he had prevented David

Pingree sweeping the board in the 125 class at Bercy. He had also just completed his first GP campaign – on Kawasaki – as world-ranked #31 but his intention to race the giants of supercross head-on in their own backyard was already firmly entrenched in his psyche.

It would be just over four years before he departed Europe for good – only returning for weekends each autumn – but he made his mark on the outdoor scene too. Progress was steady at first with 16th in his second 125 GP campaign as his size worked against him on the small

S O N



Homecoming! Throughout his stint Stateside Vuillemin has been a regular at Bercy but now the rest of Europe will get to see him as well...



bikes before moving into the major league on Yamaha, the brand with which his name was indelibly associated for most of his career before a final fling on the US scene with Makita Suzuki last year.

David stayed on 125 for a further two summers, advancing to second in the world to Chicco Chiodi in 1998 before a single 250 GP season saw him finish third in the world in 1999. His 58 GPs had brought six victories and 16 podiums but the world knew where David's career was headed. He had already swept to >>



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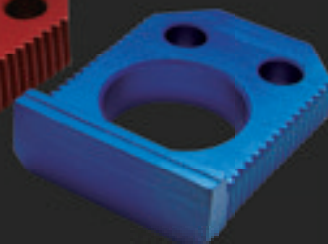


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second in the West Coast SX series before rushing back for that final GP campaign and his first defeat of McGrath at Bercy set David up for the first of two assaults on the king's throne which only narrowly came up short.

David also ranked top six on five occasions in the US Nationals but he's only raced outdoors twice in Europe since that 1999 250 GP campaign and both times were for his country in the Nations. He never made any secret about his despair at not being chosen to don the tricolour at St Jean D'Angely in 2000 – particularly when the home squad were not even classified after world champ Fred Bolley DNF'd both motos – and it was with a certain degree of satisfaction that he put country before personal revenge to lead France to their one and only Nations success 12 months later at Namur.

Where the famous names had failed in the past, the tightly-knit trio of Vuillemin, Yves Demaria and Luigi Seguy created a sensation to equal the British win seven years previously. Not even the French press gave them a cat in hell's chance but their esprit saw the trio home over the Belgian squad of Everts, Smets and Ramon with points to spare. It had to be one of the most emotional Nations podiums of all time, David heartily singing away to the Marseillaise with tears streaming down his face.

It would be another four years before David was invited to race for his country again and while there was no fairytale ending as the USA started their current win streak, David again gave his all as the home squad made up for 2000 by at least mounting the podium on that glorious autumn day at Ernee.

Four winters ago David insisted as we chatted at the Genova SX that he saw no likelihood of ever returning to Europe to take care of that little piece of unfinished business which had earned him two medals but no world outdoor crown. "GPs were good back in the old

days but it's a big mess now. Why ride for zero? It seems like I could earn more money staying home [in California with his American wife and their two children] and coaching somebody."

So as he contemplates career GP start #59 at Faenza on the final weekend of March what has changed? "I was getting a little tired of US SX. I still enjoy it but the bikes are going too fast now. The tracks are the same but they are getting too dangerous because the bikes are too powerful. There are guys like Stewart, Reed – they do some crazy jumps so you have to do them too and it's just too dangerous. I just turned 31 and I'm over that.

"And there aren't any outdoor-only deals in the States anymore, not ones you can live from anyway. There was a possibility that I could manage a team but I still want to race – '08 was a tough season with a lot of injuries but the bottom line is I still want to race and I feel like SX in Europe is a lot safer, more fun, less pressure.

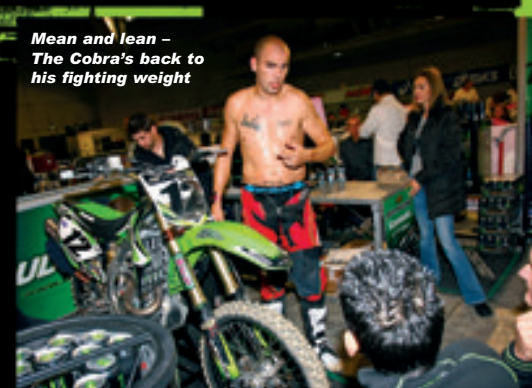
"We still live mostly in the US – that's our base – but we have a house in France too and we're open about what we do in the future. I think it's a good time for me to change, to bring my kids to Europe to see something of the world. It's a whole lotta things together.

"When I started talking for my deal the exchange rate was very interesting because the Dollar was like 1.5 to the Euro or something but it's not really about the money. I made a lot of money in my career and we are not going to go hungry. But a lot of things have turned round since four years ago. I think I have a good deal, a good programme with Bud Racing, the team is motivated, it's a good bike and there's a lot of good people around running the team.

"I'm in a French team in France and my roots are here. I was talking to an English team too but the deal was no supercross, I had to do the British championship, several things I



David's last full season of GPs was back in '99



Mean and lean – The Cobra's back to his fighting weight

US SX has become too fast and dangerous for the French star



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With Luigi Seguy and Yves Demaria after their '01 MXdN win...



...and racing for Team France in the '05 des Nations

didn't really want to do. The family all speak English so it would have been easier there in some ways but in the end I chose here. I won't be a millionaire but it's good money. I have to do the French championship for Bud Racing but I want to do the GPs and SX in the winter. That was important."

Just how important he has shown with a string of wins and podiums during the winter season from Bilbao to Bercy and from to Geneva and Barcelona. The will to win is there and David and the team are only at the start of their development programme.

"I started on a 250F because the '09 450F wasn't here yet. I didn't want to start on the '08 and then have to change. I even raced the first SX in Spain on the 250F and I didn't get to ride much yet, only three or four weeks before Bercy and the weather has been crappy too. But we work well together and made real advances during the weekend at Bercy.

"My deal is with Bud but I think they have support from Kawasaki for bikes and parts and we're gonna get factory suspension, then an in-house engine. Bud have been doing engines for a long time, it will be good."

So what does David expect from MX1 once the action gets serious in the summer? "I said from the word go that my aim is top five in the GPs. It could sound arrogant or it could sound not high enough but I think that is both a realistic aim and also a tough one to achieve. The field is stacked with so many good riders, I haven't raced in sand for so long and those guys are fast.

"You look at lap times and they are separated by tenths of a second, in the US the tracks are almost three minutes and the gaps are enormous – sometimes from first to second is as

much as from first to 20th in the GPs. It's different racing, tough to compare. I think I will be racing with #12. Bud have asked for it and I think Giuseppe has given us that. I hope so, it's good for all of us, like DV12 is something everybody knows."

Cynics have been quick to comment after his wretched injury-racked year on Suzuki – '31, no deal in the States, David is just back in Europe for a one-year pension'. What does David have to say to them?

"You know, everybody has their opinions but I'm lean and fit again. I started September 15 with training again and I've been working really hard. I'm working with Jacky Vimond who was with me in '02 when we beat Carmichael. I beat the best in the world during my career. I don't have to win but I would still like to.

"I never really won anything outdoor in Europe before I left but I think if you work to be top five it's the same amount of work to win and if I'm top five I'm not going to be far off. That's why I say top five. I had a lot of seconds and of course I want to win but if at the end of the year I'm fifth then I'll be satisfied that I have achieved my goal.

"Top three is tough – Cairoli moving up, all the guys from last year, it's crazy. De Dycker, Philippaerts, Coppins, Barragan, Nagl – they're all really fast. And I don't know those guys, I never really raced against them.

"Everybody is out there to win but in my head I don't want to feel bummed out if I get sixth or seventh at the first race. I know it's going to be difficult but I'm ready to work at it. That's why I came here September 15, riding and training with Jacky. I will try my best and if I don't get hurt and things go smooth I think top five is possible."



FAIRY TALE ENDING?

IT WAS HAPPILY EVER AFTER FOR DOROTHY AND TOTO BUT THINGS DON'T QUITE PAN OUT FOR DOUGIE LAMPKIN IN WHAT COULD WELL BE HIS LAST STAND AT SHEFFIELD ARENA...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

It took one scarecrow, a cowardly lion, his bessie mate the tin man, a myriad of munchkins, some flying monkeys, a dead witch or two and one wannabe wizard for Dorothy Gale to learn this fact but being a whole lot smarter and quite wise too, 12-time world trials champion Dougie Lampkin MBE has always known that there's no place like home.

And that's probably why the six foot two Yorkshireman claims that his favourite trial in the whole wide world is the Sheffield indoor – an annual event that goes off big-style each New Year just 50 miles from his birthplace in Silsden and is co-promoted by his dad Martin and fellow entrepreneur Neil Crosswaite.

Dougie's not the only one to make the trek to the steel city either as over 6,000 feet-up fans follow the yellow brick road – or the M1 as it's more commonly known on maps and stuff – to Sheffield's Hallam FM Arena for the opening round of the 2009 SPEA FIM Indoor Trial World Championship.

Amazingly and for the first time ever in the history of the ITWC Dougie has to start with wildcard status after slipping out of the requisite – for automatic entry – top five in the final 2008 WTC standings. And these five who are in it to win it based on their world outdoor rankings – Antonio Bou, Adam Raga, Takahisa Fujinami, Albert Cabestany and Jeroni Fajardo – are joined by FIM seeded rider Michael 'the

Mighty Atom' Brown who along with Dougie turns the fantastic five into a super seven.

Although seven riders are entered only six will make it to the WITC points-paying final that's due to go out live on Eurosport and a bunch more international TV channels you've probably never heard of bang on the stroke of 9pm. Unfortunately for Brown it's he who is cut from the competition as he's outclassed by everyone bar Spaniard Albert Cabestany in the qualification round despite giving 100 per cent effort through each and every section on his Sherco debut.

At the sharp end of quali Raga takes an easy win despite losing two marks after cruising through both head-to-head races >>

*Reigning champ Toni Bou
kicks his title defence off
with maximum points*



*When he holds the lead at the
halfway stage the crowd sense
a shock result but Dougie can't
keep the pressure on*

*Former champ Adam Raga loses
second on the final section*





Jeroni Fajardo is out-classed in Sheffield



Fujigas hits the eject button!



on half gas. Meanwhile, reigning champ Bou is second ahead of Lampkin, Fajardo, Fujinami and Cabestany who scrapes the final transfer spot. As well as downsizing the field by one the qualification results sort the running order for the first half of the final meaning Cabestany will ride the first three sections first with Fujigas, Fajardo, Lampkin, Bou and Raga all following in that order.

Before that though is another round of head-to-head races. Like in quali the winner scores zero for a win with the runner-up losing two marks. Race one sees Cabestany get the better of Fujigas in a battle of the four-strokes, Lampkin keeps his win streak alive with a solid victory over Beta two-stroke team-mate Fajardo while Bou scalps Raga in a different strokes battle of the Spanish trials warlords.

The first section – section two – is the cable reels. Not proving particularly difficult in the qualifying round, in reverse this section is a killer that costs five men five marks. Promoter Crosswaite is sweating it out in the crowd. "It looks bad on telly if nobody gets through it – but it only needs one," he tells nobody in particular. His saviour is Toni Bou who attacks

the difficult double step that catches out everyone else by flowing through it carrying some speed instead of attacking it from a dead start. Losing one mark for a dab and one on time, Bou takes an early lead in the trial.

Section three is the big yellow skips and it's a much simpler section with everyone bar Bou going clean. Unfortunately for the reigning champ his mistake is a big one and he comes clattering to a halt, dropping maximum points and undoing all his previous good work in the previous hazard.

The fourth section is the logs and this proves to be a true test of the riders' skills. Cabestany is first to go but he doesn't even come close to reaching the end cards of this truly difficult section. Fujigas struggles in the middle part of the section and this takes a lot of time but by staying feet-up and ripping through the end cards at full throttle he manages to keep his score in this section to just one mark lost on time. While Fajardo fives, Lampkin replicates Fujinami's score of one to move into the lead of the trial with Bou and Raga still left to ride. Both stay feet up and clean on time too which means the Yorkshireman takes a single-point advantage into

the second half of the final.

A new rule states the running order must be revised at the midway point with the current leader riding the remaining sections last and the sixth placed rider leading the way. Fajardo fives again on the boxes after losing traction on the freshly painted surface and Cabestany follows suit, making the same error in the same place. Fujigas is the first to make it through the end cards but loses a mark on time which allows Bou to be the first rider to go clean. Raga makes a hash of things early on but regroups – staying feet-up the whole time – and loses just one mark on time. Then comes Lampkin who's looking more and more confident and more and more like his old self...

With the Sheffield crowd yelling copious amounts of encouragement Dougie's nerve holds until he reaches the toughest part of this long and difficult section. In order to go clean he must keep his momentum up and drive through the steep final part of the hazard. With minder James waiting patiently atop the final step, Lampkin lines himself up perfectly, makes a good go of it but loses traction at the very top and drops backwards into the abyss as the capacity

RESULTS

SHEFFIELD INDOOR TRIAL

1	Toni Bou	(Montesa)	7
2	Takahisa Fujinami	(Montesa)	10
3	Adam Raga	(Gas Gas)	11
4	Dougie Lampkin	(Beta)	16
5	Albert Cabestany	(Sherco)	20
6	Jeroni Fajardo	(Beta)	25



crowd follow suit, dropping back into the depths of their seats with a groan.

The Michelin tyres section sees everybody bar Fajardo go clean so as the trial enters the final section it's Bou in the lead on seven, Raga second just one mark behind and Fujigas third on nine ahead of Dougie with 11 marks lost.

The final section is the popular – with the fans at least – waterfall which this year needs to be ridden up and down twice in order to reach the section ends cards. Fajardo takes a five without failing – three dabs and two on time – while Cabestany fives it the old fashioned way – on his ear. Fujigas is the first of the contenders to roll through the in cards and banzais his way though the end cards for just one mark lost on time. With an overall score of 10 it's still possible for the Japanese star to win the trial but only if Raga scores more than two and Bou picks up three or more – the pressure's on.

While Fujigas stays on red alert – in case a run-off race to decide things is required – the reigning champ settles the outcome early by cleaning the final hazard with style, hopping and skipping up both sides of the almost vertical fibreglass structure without coming close to

shedding even a single dab.

Raga meanwhile is anything but rock steady. Dropping two dabs leaves him level with Fujigas but the cocky Catalan also runs over on time and picks up an additional mark to finish the section for three marks lost and on a grand total of 11 meaning Takahisa takes second and the Montesas stand first and second on the podium.

Dougie's level with Raga on 11 as he enters the final section and with a podium place possible the anxious crowd perch their posteriors right on the razor's edge of their seats. But before the 6,000 strong fans get too uncomfortable Dougie makes a big, big mistake and drops the Beta and another maximum score. It's still a great effort from the GOAT though and the Sheffield crowd know it too giving the old champ a rousing round of applause.

"They've been great all night," says Dougie of the massive and very vocal crowd. "I am slightly disappointed to have missed out on a top three finish but despite that I suppose I have to be fairly happy with the way I've ridden tonight. The five on the boxes left me playing catch up and I had no other option other than to go for it in the final section."

British young gun Michael Brown just misses the cut





SOUNDADVICE!

STUCK IN A RUT IN THE GYM OR ON THE TRACK? THEN BANG ON SOME TUNES AND GET INTO THE GROOVE...

Words by Alan Milway

Training to a soundtrack is nothing new and many people do it whether they like it or not as gyms often have Euro trash blasting from their speakers. However, with the proliferation of mp3 players and some interesting new research, the subject of just how music can help you train and race is well worth considering.

Music is able to direct your attention, alter your mood and also your state of arousal. Different tempos, styles and volumes all play a part to create a cocoon around you as you block out everything else. This may be to focus you on exactly what you are doing – giving full attention to the task in hand. Or it may be to take your mind off the laborious task you are doing – giving all your attention to the sounds flowing into your grey matter and diverting your attention well away from what you are doing.

During training, if you are in the weights room or trying to break a personal best time in the

2km row for example, you are very much focused on exactly what you are doing – listening to your breathing, focusing on technique, looking at the clock ticking...this is important to get the very best out of yourself and focusing is vital. Music can help this by increasing your arousal – loud, high tempo music will help you get the best from the exercise and help narrow the focus and avoid distraction.

However, in many training sessions focusing on every second of the exercise would be painful, add to the boredom and may even increase fatigue. This is one of the reasons there are television screens in front of exercise bikes and running machines in gyms. In these circumstances you want to disassociate from the task and think about anything but the pounding of feet or the whoosh of the exercise bike fan. Plugging in some headphones and choosing music that is uplifting and has a similar tempo to the exercise itself and can take you away

mentally will be a massive advantage. Tracks that take you back to holidays past, have lyrics you can sing along to or are 'classic' albums will all help you take your mind off the task and to a 'happy place'!

For each of us there is very much a science meets personal choice factor and no-one is suggesting you evaluate every piece of music on your iPod and discard all those that don't fit into the right bpm bracket regardless of if you actually like them! However, taking off the crap that has accumulated to fill the 32gb hard drive is probably worth it. You don't want a Sugarbabes track your girlfriend uploaded suddenly coming on when you are pushing to your limit during an interval session.

Music affects our emotional responses and in some cases to a very high degree. Everyone has a track that will put them in a good mood immediately and pick them up. By the same token there are some tunes that are almost



unbearable due to bringing back bad memories or sad times. There are also tunes that are ideal to relax us and lower our heart rates which may not be of interest most of the time but when you are lying on the sofa with your copy of DBR these tunes help chill you out.

Our emotional responses to music are usually due to intrinsic or extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors of the music will be the acoustics of the music – the beat, the genre, tempo etc. Extrinsic factors are what we associate with the music itself so are not down to the tune but what we relate it to. Having a tune that you listen to before an important event will build up this link and give positive reinforcement.

We have all seen GP riders working on their gates before the start of an event with dustbin lid headphones on (yes, I'm taking about YOU Antonio Cairoli!). Perhaps to discourage the advances of reporters or journalists, they are often a great way to focus a rider before the

event. Many club riders who suffer from high anxiety before an event could consider this method to help them.

Before a race the type of music that is ideal will come down to the way you deal with nerves – do you get over excited and nervous and need to calm down before a race or do you never reach a level of excitement and are just lethargic before your race? If you are over excited, slower tempo music – something that can take your attention away from the situation – would be ideal and help greatly. By the same token, if you never build yourself up enough before a race some high tempo tunes will help you visualise the holeshot or get you excited about what is to come. Imagining the race to the soundtrack is often very motivating and will give a very positive mood.

We all have different styles of music that we like and that we listen to at different times of the day or during different moods. To help us train

better all we need to do is to look at our choices and try to choose the most appropriate for the exercise. For those of you that don't train to any music because you think it will be distracting it is well worth trying it for yourself – I think you will be surprised at the outcome.

With the winter months coming and the need to get out in the cold to keep fit, using music as a tool is very worthwhile. It will help motivate you, ward off the feelings of fatigue and help you enjoy the training itself. In long duration exercise try to balance music that will make you 'switch off' from the exercise to music that will make you tune in to the exercise itself – otherwise you can drift off the pace. From a racing and competitive point of view, music can greatly influence feelings of anxiety and nerves and be very positive in getting the best out of your performance.

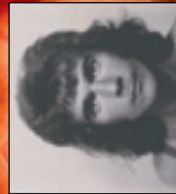
So to get the most from your training – turn on and tune in!



GREG ALBERTYN SLAMS
HIS JAN DE GROOT HONDA
TO THE 1993 250 TITLE



DAVE THORPE'S DRIVE TO
VICTORY AT NAMUR
HELPED SECURE HIS
FIRST + HONDA'S FIFTH
WORLD TITLE IN 1985



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer,
magazine art director, photographer and part-time art
college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words.
He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of
British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to
Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan
Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble'
and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

S L I M PICKINGS!

FROM NOYCEY IN '79 THROUGH TO BOLLEY IN Y2K, ONCE HONDA GOT THE TASTE OF VICTORY
THE TITLES CAME FAST AND FURIOUS. AND THEN BIG RED'S WIN-STREAK DRIED UP...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

Honda recently enquired about their grand prix record during the first decade of the 21st Century. What had been their best results year on year since Fred Bolley had won his second and Honda's 24th world championship in 2000? The answer was rather alarming. The Honda Racing Corporation has not won again!

In 2001, talented young Ulsterman Gordon Crockard placed third in the 250 GP class while best half-litre Honda pilot was Swede Jocke Karlsson, a lowly 10th in the 500 series. Both rode for British teams – Crockard at Harry Ainsworth's CAS and Karlsson with RWJ.

Kiwi Josh Coppins upheld Honda's honour in 2002, finishing second to Mickael Pichon's Suzuki in the 250 GPs. But in the short-lived 'MXGP' class of '03, top Honda was Japan's Yoshi Atsuta in 10th!

The brand new 'MX1' of 2004 saw Pichon and Coppins, both now mounted on Hondas, beaten into second and third places respectively by their 'bete noir' Stefan Everts (Yamaha). Josh chased home Everts again in '05 before being joined at CAS Honda by big Belgian Ken De Dycker. Ken placed fourth overall and best Honda in 2006.

De Dycker dropped to fifth – still best Honda, in 2007 – with Mike Brown seventh and new CAS Honda recruit Billy MacKenzie ninth. And it was Billy Mac who finished top Honda of '08, repeating his ninth place ahead of Martin Honda's Marc De Reuver.

Honda has fared much worse in MX2! Carl Nunn finished a fine eighth in 2004 but no-one got near the top 10 in 2005 and they scarcely made the top 20 in '06! Injury restricted Pascal Leuret to seventh in 2007 and fellow Frenchman Marvin Musquin managed only 14th last year.

This season MacKenzie and De Reuver will be joined by Kevin Strijbos and Cedric Melotte to uphold Honda's jaded reputation on the grand prix front. Yet this is the company who, after Graham

Noyce had claimed their first world title in 1979, went on to dominate MXGPs for the next 20 years!

They launched the breath-taking 500cc 'fire engine' in 1975 in the hands of US-domiciled Dutchman Pierre Karsmakers, Yamaha's reigning AMA supercross champ. Honda had in fact first won in the States in 1973 when Gary Jones claimed the 500 Nationals and followed that up with a 125 double for Marty Smith in 1974 and '75. Marty then came to Europe in 1976 as Honda launched an audacious plan to scoop both world and American titles in the same season. But the blond Californian lost out to Bob Hannah (Yamaha) in the US and could finish only fourth over here, although he did notch up Honda's first three GP wins in Italy, Denmark and America.

Meantime, Honda's 500 GP assault gathered momentum with the signing of Smith's fellow Californian and 500 GP regular Brad Lackey in 1977. Fourth overall, 'Bad Brad' improved to second behind Finnish legend Heikki Mikkola (Yamaha) in 1978, winning Honda's first 500 GP in Austria, while new team-mate Graham Noyce placed seventh. Lackey then left for Kawasaki and Noyce, joined at Honda by suave young Belgian Andre Malherbe, clinched that first world crown with a display of thundering consistency and a couple of GP wins, most memorably at Farleigh Castle!

'Dede' Malherbe beat off Lackey to secure his first and Honda's second world title in 1980 and retained his crown in 1981 against team-mate Noyce who had bust his leg the year before. Andre in turn broke a leg at Carlsbad in 1982 when embroiled in another bitter contest with Lackey and Brad's Suzuki took the title.

By now the Honda Racing Corporation was intent on buying up all the best young talent on view and the following year signed Kawasaki starlet Dave Thorpe alongside Malherbe and Noyce. Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) fought off that fearful trio in an epic 1983 season and Honda responded by hiring Eric Geboers and Andre Vromans to replace 'Rolls Noyce' in '84. This muscular riposte worked. Malherbe won again and though his pal

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Deuxième	Thiérèse	★With	Ferraro
Occupation	Graphic Designer		
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM		
Date of birth	9/3/47		

Jack Burnicle

Thérèse signature of Burnicle
Signature of Burnicle

Visual signature of wife

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Georges Jobe (Kawasaki) managed to sneak second Thorpe, Vromans and Geboers carpeted the next three places in the table!

Thorpe claimed his personal first the following season, squeezing out Malherbe in Switzerland's muddy finale, with Geboers completing a Honda whitewash in third. And the same trio repeated that result in 1986! Honda then thrust a nervous Geboers into the 250 arena where 'The Kid' duly won their first quarter-litre title before a lean, nonchalant Frenchman called Jean-Michel Bayle claimed their maiden 125 crown in 1988.

When Thorpe got hurt seeking his 500 GP hat-trick in 1987 a private Honda in the hands of an emotional Georges Jobe took the honours. Geboers returned to win a spirited 1988 duel with Thorpe – the latter unluckily injured in Holland when atop the championship table – to make it 10 world titles in 10 years since Noyce claimed Honda's first on the Belgian battlefield of Namur!

Bayle dominated the 1989 250cc world championship while Thorpe, Geboers and Chambers-backed Aussie newcomer Jeff Leisk disputed the 500s. Thorpe eventually emerged triumphant, then left for Kawasaki. Italian clothing company Chambers ran Leisk and winner Geboers in the 1990 500 GPs. This marked a fateful move for HRC as they left their motocross endeavours increasingly in the hands of private teams.

American Trampas Parker, again backed by Chambers (and, significantly, the Italian Martin brothers), snatched Honda the 1991 250 world title in Japan while long-term privateer Jobe cleverly clinched his second 500cc championship. 'Gorgeous Georges' did it again, by a whisker from Kurt Nicoll's Kawasaki, in 1992 as a South African newcomer named Greg Albertyn, riding for Dutchman Jan De Groot, claimed the 125 crown.

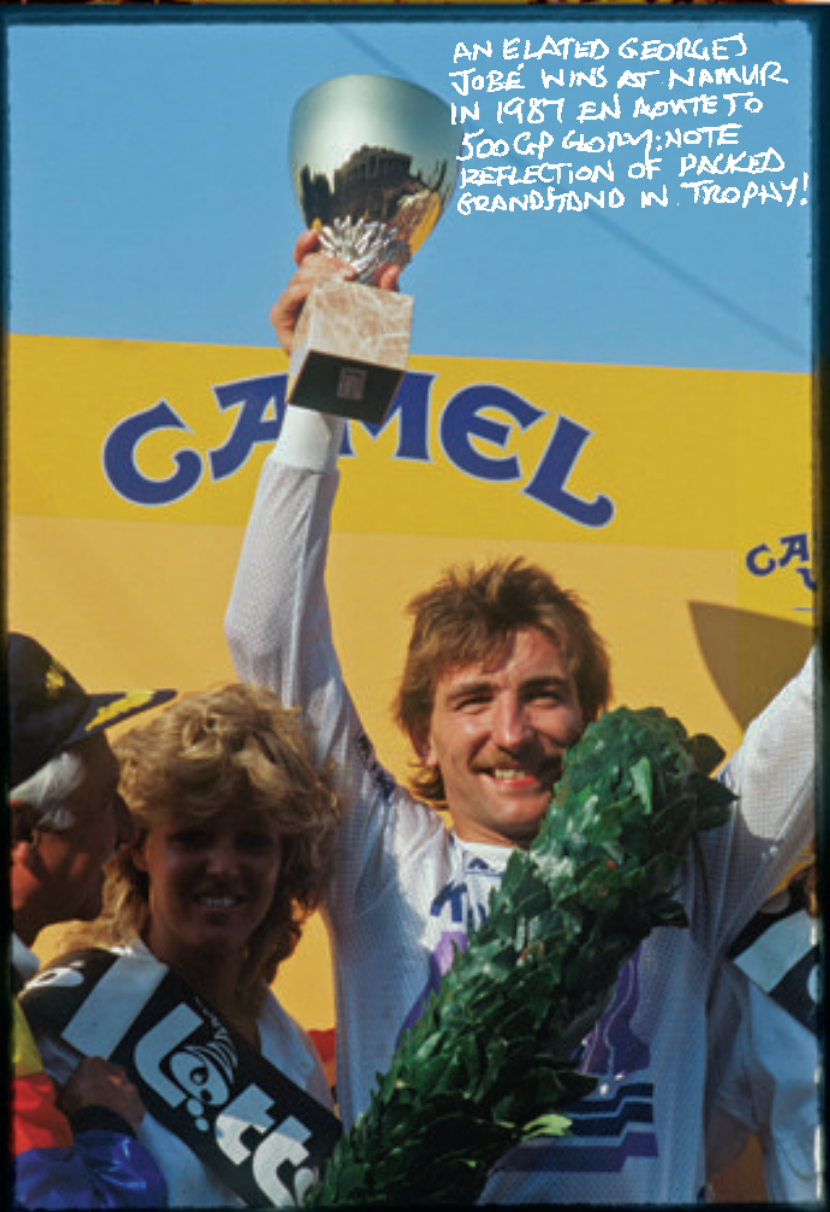
'Albee' and De Groot did it again in 1993 – brilliantly winning the 250 GPs this time – but with no sign of factory input from Honda, De Groot departed and joined Kawasaki who, with his expertise, finally won their first world title through Stefan Everts in 1995! Swedish privateer Marcus Hansson stole an unlikely 1994 500cc championship for Honda and the following year Italian Alex Puzar won them a third 125 title (by three points from Chicco Chiodi's Yamaha at the last round!).

Stefan Everts signed for RWJ Honda in 1996 and retained the 250cc crown he'd won for Team Green, the stylish Belgian completing a hat-trick on his Radson Honda in 1997 before losing out in a memorable climax to Jan de Groot's Kawasaki star Sebastian Tortelli in '98.

Finally, up stepped the Swiss Pamo team and Frenchman Fred Bolley to win Honda their last two world motocross titles in 1999 and Y2K since when – despite the gallant efforts of CAS, RWJ and Martin Honda – the ultimate prize has eluded them.

So in 2009, 30 years after that great maverick Graham Noyce boozed and bruised his way to Honda's first world title, Billy Mac and his muckers still seek their elusive 25th!

GRAHAM NOYCE WON HONDA'S FIRST WORLD MX CROWN IN 1979



AN ELATED GEORGES JOBE WINS AT NAMUR IN 1987 EN ROUTE TO 500 GP GLORY: NOTE REFLECTION OF PACKED GRANDSTAND IN TROPHY!



J-M BAYLE (right) BEAT PEKKA VEHKONEN (centre) + JOHN VAN DEN BERK TO CLAIM THE 1989 250 WORLD TITLE



DAWG'S SWEET SIXTEEN!

SUTTY TAKES A CLOSE LOOK AT 16 OF THE HOTTEST OFF-ROAD DVDS THAT ARE JUST BEGGING TO BE WATCHED...

Words and photo by Sutti





THRILLBILLIES: DOUBLE WIDE

Delivering more laughs per minute than the latest Will Ferrell and Adam Sandler blockbusters combined, the most up to date instalment of motorsports madness from the Nitro Circus crew – Thrillbillies: Double Wide – is an absolute essential addition to your dirty DVD collection. There's more FMX, MX, monster truck, rally, slip n' slide, supercross, stunt and other assorted silliness style action than ever seen on one DVD before so don't delay get Thrillbillies: Double Wide today!

Rating: 10/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP '08

Despite some crazy Euro-trash style narration this review of the 2008 World Enduro Championship is actually a very enjoyable watch. The overall production is quite obviously WRC inspired and features just the right mix of all-out action and behind the scenes interviews to keep you fully entertained for the full duration.

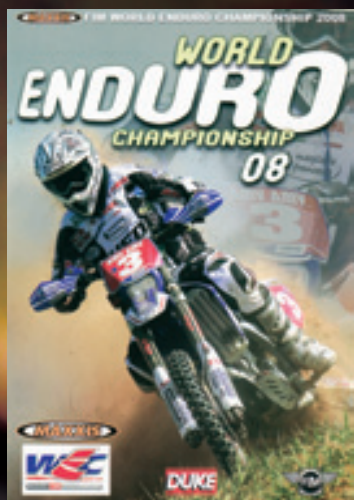
With footage from all eight rounds and including all four classes – E1, E2, E3 and Enduro Junior – there's an abundance of spectacular off-road skills showcased by some of the leading lights of enduro including Mika Ahola, Ivan Cervantes, Samuli Aro and even our own David Knight who makes a guest appearance at the Welsh round.

Dodgy commentary aside this DVD is a must watch for anyone who's interested in seeing the world's best off-road riders strutting their stuff in some downright gruelling conditions.

Rating: 7/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000



THE NEXT GENERATION 3

Gary Price delivers his third instalment of televisual youth motocross action in fine style with perhaps his best offering yet – The Next Generation 3! Following the same tried and tested format as the first two editions, TNG3 takes a close look at the world's best youth racers doing what they do best – racing hard and then enjoying some trackside tomfoolery!

As well as featuring some stunning and some not so stunning locations, TNG3 stars international young guns Eli Tomac, Ken Roczen, Jeffrey Herlings and battling Brits Max Anstie, Ed Allingham, Bradley Pockock and more making TNG3 a great all-round look at schoolboy scramble biking!

Rating: 7/10

Supplier: tngmx.com

Contact: sales@tngmx.com

THE GREAT OUTDOORS: THE DESTROYERS

Moving away from its tried and tested interview-heavy way of doing things might just have made The Great Outdoors: The Destroyers the finest motocross season review DVD ever made. By breaking down the series moto by moto, splicing in event commentary and keeping the overlay narration to a minimum this brilliantly filmed epic puts you right in the thick of the action as the 2008 AMA Outdoor Nationals are played out by the world's hardest fighting motocross racers right in front of your eyes. I personally found this movie to be absolutely outstanding in every way which is why in my eyes it's easily worth a 10 out of 10.

Rating: 10/10

Supplier: mx1.co.uk

Contact: 0191 487 2100



FROM THE GROUND UP!

The makers of this DVD call their film From The Ground Up! moto-propaganda and that's a pretty darn good description of what it is as it does its best to make motocross and FMX look like the coolest sports in the world – which is what they are! Although mostly featuring FMX and its leading athletes including Ronnie Renner, Nate Adams, Mat Rebaud et al, FTGU also stars British-born motocross racer Adam Chatfield working out and preparing for his onslaught on the supercross series. Fellow redhead racer Ricky Carmichael also makes a brief appearance during a step-up competition and crashes quite hard – ouch! Generally speaking this DVD is beautifully shot and well edited too which makes it a must watch for all fans of FMX in particular.

Rating: 9/10

Supplier: mx1.co.uk

Contact: 0191 487 2100

199 LIVES – THE TRAVIS PASTRANA STORY

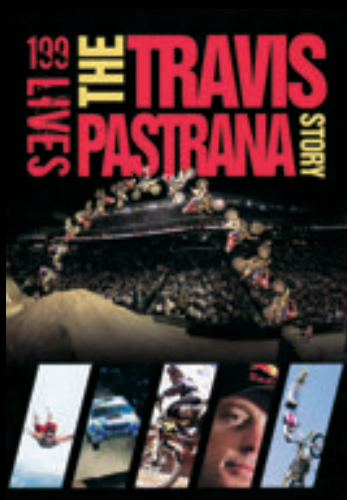
199 Lives is a truly incredible look at the life and loves of Travis Pastrana – the most famous extreme athlete on the planet. From his lowly beginnings as a peewee motocross pilot to his very latest X-Games and rally car successes, this DVD follows the career of the boy wonder as he wins motocross, supercross, rally car and freestyle events.

As well as being jam-packed with full-throttle action this DVD is also full of candid interviews and bonus features which help give a real insight into the mind of this madman. The highlight for me was Travis' own top-10 finest full-throttle moments.

Rating: 9/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000



GBXC '08

This 134-minute DVD is so downright dirty it made me want to go out and ride immediately after I'd watched it to its very end! The GBXC series is the UK's number one off-road race series and this DVD gives the viewer a real feel of just how spectacular and intense three-hour racing can be when organised and promoted properly. Starting out with plenty of excellent footage from round one at Matchams Park, this DVD follows the series through rounds in Monmouth, Llanarmon and finally Ashby-de-la-Zouch with racing from both the morning clubman and afternoon pro races. As an added bonus there's plenty of on-bike footage and one or two bone-bashing tumbles that you'll just have to watch again and again.

Rating: 9/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

2008 MOTOCROSS OF NATIONS

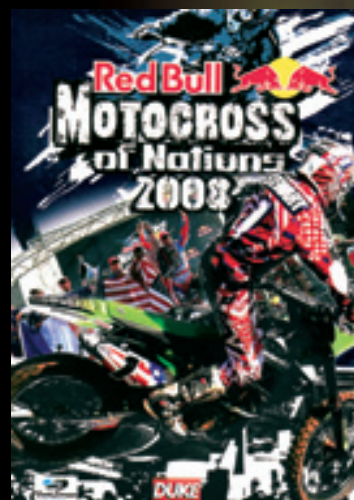
Fancy reliving the 2008 Motocross of Nations from the comfort of your own living room without getting soaked by the inclement weather or horribly ripped off by trackside vendors? Well here's your chance...

Now available on DVD format this Youthstream produced look back at 2008's biggest motocross race has all the race action and interviews you'll ever need but like the 2008 MX GP season review the footage can seem a little lo-res in places. If you can get over that then it's not a bad DVD at all and seems to capture most of the highlights and important passes of this great event.

Rating: 6/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000





WORLD INDOOR TRIALS 2008

World championship level indoor trials is probably the most skilful and potentially exciting thing you'll ever see on two wheels – live. When it's filmed from a distance and the crap quality footage has had all the bike noises taken away before some boring wanhole talks rubbish all over it then it soon becomes about as exciting as one of Marge's anecdotes. One for truly hardcore feet-up fans only.

Rating: 2/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

ONE CHANCE TO WIN

When Charles Bush pulled the funds together to make a documentary about the 1975 AMA 500cc nationals surely he never thought it would take over 30 years for the end result to see the light of day but that's exactly what happened when he made One Chance to Win. The film was originally ready for release in '76 but after the distribution company he signed for went tits up, Charles was convinced his movie would stay in the can until the producers of The Motocross Files unearthed this gem and restored it to its full glory. But while the original movie itself is good it's the 48-minute documentary – Behind the Battle: The Making of One Chance To Win – that really rocks my socks. Featuring interviews with the riders and mechanics involved in the series and some amusing musings from mushes in the know Bob Hannah, Jody Weisel and Bush himself, the 'making of' might just be the best thing to happen to mid-'70s motocross since the Jofa face protector.

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: onechancetowin.com

Contact: todd@pdmv.com



MAXXIS ACU BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP 2008

There's plenty of bar-to-bar TV-quality action from all eight rounds of the Maxxis British motocross championship on this here DVD which makes it a must have for all fans of Brit MX. With plenty of race action, interviews and the odd horrible crash or two – Jake Nicholls and Michael Phillips share the nasty crash of the year award for their Donington and Foxhill efforts respectively – there's plenty to keep you entertained from the drop of the gate at Donington to the fall of the chequers at Hawkstone Park.

Although the MX1 class is a little bit like watching Groundhog Day with Billy MacKenzie dominating everything bar two rounds the season-long scrap between Stephen Sword and Shaun Simpson will keep you on the edge of your seat as the pair trade passes and rub plastics in some of the toughest scraps seen on screen this season.

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

ROMANIACS

There's absolutely no way it's possible to squeeze in all the action and drama the miles upon miles of torturous off-road riding the Romaniacs produces on one DVD – although this movie from Throttle Entertainment comes closer than anything ever seen before. The annual epic race itself is a classic and this film by Jeff Pakosta isn't far behind. Watch closely as some of the world's leading off-road riders tackle five days of torture in the Carpathian mountain range.

Rating: 7/10

Supplier: smartzz.co.uk

Contact: 01244 552387



SUPERMOTO 2008

Supermoto is one bike sport that I find it difficult to enjoy as a spectator and this DVD does nothing to help change my mind despite the knowledgeable commentator trying his very best. There's nowt wrong with the production quality either, it's just as a sport supermoto is dull as dishwater to watch. One highlight of this DVD however is the circuit for the Bulgarian round of the championship or maybe it was the Supermoto of Nations – I was feeling a little sleepy by this point. Anyway, the purpose built totally Tarmac circuit is a sick supermoto playground complete with tabletops, jumps and whoops – how much fun would that be to tear up in your manager's company car?

Rating: 4/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

OFF ROAD: THE ULTIMATE HOW-TO FEATURING NATHAN WOODS

This visually stimulating tutorial DVD from WORCs racer Nathan Woods is well worth slotting into your DVD player if you fancy picking up some top tips from a top performer in the American off-road scene. Starting with the basics – but also offering plenty of advanced techniques – Nathan's step-by-step ride guide is not only very informative but more importantly it's entertaining which makes it easier to watch time and time again ensuring all the information eventually sinks in. It's worth noting that most of Nathan's techniques and tips are of use to pure motocross racers as well as off-road warriors. Beautifully filmed in a variety of locations, this DVD is a real winner!

Rating: 8/10

Supplier: smartzz.co.uk

Contact: 01244 552387



MX08: OFFICIAL SEASON REVIEW

The 2008 MXGP season was the most exciting it's been for a good few years with both the MX1 and MX2 title chases going all the way to the final round in Faenza before being settled once and for all. This DVD follows both series from the get go and has most of the key passes, crashes and bar-bashes that made the '08 championships the classics that they were. The one stumbling block with this DVD though is the quality and the majority of footage appears to be a little on the lo-res side which means it's fuzzy at times which is never good! If you can get over the quality issue though and you're a massive fan of GP motocross then this is well worth casting an eye over as the racing at last year's GPs was truly outstanding and this DVD pretty much captures the lot.

Rating: 6/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000

WORLD OUTDOOR TRIALS 2008

Marge the designer reckons you should never judge a DVD by its cover which is good news for Duke Video's World Outdoor Trials 2008 season review as the sleeve is a proper shocker! Unfortunately, things don't get much better when you slot the disc in your Doovde player as this season review does its best to make trials look way duller than it really is. Badly filmed, badly narrated and badly edited – avoid like the plague unless you fancy buying an overpriced coaster for your coffee cup!

Rating: 3/10

Supplier: dukevideo.com

Contact: 01624 640000



FLAT OUT!

AWAY FROM THE MUD OF MOTOCROSS LIES A WHOLE NEW DIRT BIKING WORLD WHERE THE MACHINES DON'T COST AN ARM AND A LEG BUT THE FUN FACTOR'S PRICELESS...

Words and photos by Adam Duckworth

Failed speedway riders or American-obsessed 1970s throwback wannabes? A whole new sport that's opening up riding dirt bikes to a new audience or a way for ageing motocross riders to extend their racing without the physical toughness you need to compete on the rough stuff? We check out the British short track championship to find out the score.

1 YOU GET TO FEEL LIKE A SUPERSTAR RACING ON FLOODLIT, PROFESSIONAL TRACKS WITH PAYING SPECTATORS >>

Short track is a total passion for ex-road racer Pete Boast. He's the man responsible for taking his love of racing around dirt and shale ovals in the US and kickstarting it over here in the UK.

The series is predominantly held on speedway tracks with either a clay or limestone base. "In the US they also use the really long car racing tracks," says Boast. "These can be up to a mile in length and are truly spectacular. They get crowds of up to 25,000 and all the manufacturers have full factory teams."

Car racing ovals in the UK are usually hot rod or banger circuits with loads of Armco right next to the track which doesn't make for a safe bike circuits. That's why speedway tracks, which have airfence barriers, are preferable.

"There are loads of speedway tracks all over the UK for us to ride on and we have classes for just about every sort of bike from converted motocrossers to big, heavy road bikes like Harleys. Everything. We even have a youth class," he says.

The most popular machines are older four-stroke motocross bikes which cost around £2000 when fully converted. The trick is to get a short wheelbase so shorter road bike forks are fitted and the rear end lowered. The Thunderbike class is for over 600cc and features a real mix of road bikes. Even the lowly Honda Bros commuter bike took a race win at the event at Peterborough we went to. And a big fat Harley Davidson went end over end, too. Truly unusual sights!







2

IT BRINGS BIKE RACING BACK TO THE HEADY DAYS OF CUSTOM-BUILT FRAMES >>

What you're looking at here is a genuine Harley-Davidson race bike. Except, of course, there's nothing on it that was made by Harley. It's a real US-spec short track racer that Harley marketed as their own bike as they didn't have anything suitable for the single-cylinder class.

The bike is a 562cc Rotax single-cylinder four-stroke engine in a chromoly steel chassis made in California by legendary frame maker Ron Woods. This one is owned by Nottingham's Colin Batchford who owns eight different dirt bikes but only took up racing last year when he was bitten by the short track bug. For a real hand-made race bike it's not hideously expensive, either. It cost around £5500 and was one of the most expensive bikes on the track.

He's also got a some other custom-made short track bikes including a Yamaha XS650 road bike engine – bored to 840cc – in a Champion frame, a Rotax-engined bike with a Knight frame which he bought after having a try-out at the CCM short track school and a Meriden-era Triumph Bonneville.

Add in three KTM's – a 600 enduro, 620 Supermoto and 625 Supermoto – plus a Honda CR500 motor in a CR250 chassis and you could be forgiven for thinking he's a man obsessed. "It's getting a bit out of hand," says Colin. "But I love bikes that are a bit different."



3

IT'S A LIFELINE FOR AGEING MOTOCROSS BIKES >>

If you turn up at a British championship motocross with a five-year-old bike you'd be laughed out of the pits. But bosh some lower forks and treaded tyres on an old crosser, throw away the front brake and you've got a state-of-the-art short track bike.

These two ex-motocross bikes may be outmoded on the motocross circuit but are still very competitive on the shale ovals. This CRF450 is a 2003 model owned by 37-year-old Lincoln man Shaun Brown, an ex-road racer who teaches road racing at the Ron Haslam academy.

His bike is a typical short tracker. Bought for £1400 off eBay, he boshed on the pre-upside down forks off an old Yamaha R6 road bike, drilled a new hole in the suspension linkage to make the bike lower and threw away the airbox. The front wheel was relaced to a 19-inch rim. Total cost was £1700.

"It's cheap racing," he says. "And at £40 to enter the meetings that's not bad either. Plus there's a discount if you enter the whole series. I gave up road racing as it was so expensive and there was lots of aggro in terms of the time it took. With this you arrive, race and go home all in a day. Easy."

The KX250 two-stroke used to be raced at motocross by its owner Steve Coles. "But now I just do this on it," he says. "It's loads of fun and cheap."





4


IT'S A WAY FOR FRUSTRATED SPECTATORS TO HAVE A GO AT BIKESPORT WITHOUT THE EXPENSE OF BUYING A BIKE >>

Not everyone who races fancies splashing out thousands on a race bike, transport, maintenance and all the associated costs and headaches. Take 38-year-old Kevin Sleight from Scunthorpe. For years he'd been an avid speedway fan, even taking up marshalling as it was a way to get more involved.

But you can't really just have a go at speedway yourself – which is where short track comes in. "I'd always wanted to have a go but I had only ever ridden a bike around the fields as a kid," he says. "I was always told I was too old to start racing. But this is ideal."

Sleight rents a full-prepped CCM short track bike which costs £199 for a weekend of racing. You just turn up, ride and have fun. "The idea of buying a bike, renting a van and converting a bike to race when you've not got a background in it is really off-putting," he says. "This is a great way of going racing with no worries. I love it."





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5

YOU CAN MAKE A RACE-READY COMPETITIVE BIKE OUT OF JUST ABOUT ANYTHING >>

This may look like a converted Harley Davidson Sportster – in reality it's anything but. It's an engine out of a Honda Trans Alp road bike squeezed into the frame of a 25-year-old KTM enduro bike. Total cost of this beauty was just £1200.

Its owner is 43-year-old John Lee from Chorley, Lancs, who yearned to race a V-twin after competing on a Rotax single for a couple of years. John is a typical thrill-seeking type who loves to be the first to try the next thing.

He started racing BMX age seven and became a full-time pro. "And short track reminds me of BMX as in the UK it's a new sport and you can just buy a bike and have a go," he says. "There's a real good spirit with the other riders. And throwing a bike like this sideways is just a riot!"



6

IT EXTENDS THE CAREER OF MOTOCROSS RIDERS >>

Richard May has been racing dirt bikes non-stop since 1973. That's 36 years – and he's only 44. His British championship motocross days are over but since then he's been a British championship level supermoto contender and is now part of CCM's effort to take the short track crown.

He races the CCM single, which uses a Suzuki DRZ440 motor, as well as a beast of a CCM called the Sledgehammer which uses a 710cc motor from a Suzuki Freebird. "I did supermoto for five years but it became very serious," he says. "This is competitive but very friendly. Like supermoto was in its infancy seven or eight years ago. The biggest challenge when you start is trying to gauge the amount of grip you have on all the different surfaces we ride on. I'm still learning!"



DEAFMETTLE!

PROFOUNDLY DEAF TEENAGER ASHLEY FIOLEK
IS AN MX GIRL ON ONE HELL OF A MISSION...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

Weighing in at just over 45 kilos and standing a smidge over five foot two, 18-year-old Ashley Fiolek is the most unlikely looking national motocross champion you'll ever see. But don't let her petite stature, killer smile and easy going demeanour fool you – this pint-sized princess is mustard on a motocross bike and she means serious business too!

There are a million and one little things about Ashley that make her special but the one thing that's talked about most often is the fact that she's profoundly deaf. For sure it has made a difference to her life – her parents Jim and Roni relocated from their home in Michigan to sunny St. Augustine just so Ashley could attend the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind – but on the whole it's safe to assume that she's never used not being able to hear as an excuse not to do stuff.

Despite having hearing difficulties, communicating with Ashley is remarkably easy whether it's through one of her parents who are only too happy to translate and sign, then sign and translate or Fiolek's own favourite – texting. Ashley's been known to spend whole days messaging her friends on her mobile phone to get all the latest gossip and is rumoured to receive and send up to 1000 SMSs a day.

Like many youngsters introduced to motocross it was her father Jim who showed Ashley the sport for the first time. "He used to race then one year he took me to watch my first supercross in Michigan – I was hooked! I was seven years old when I started riding and racing myself and it soon became clear that it was something that I loved to do."

After rapidly improving through the youth amateur ranks it wasn't long before Ashley became a firm fixture on the national scene

racing with and often beating the boys in the 85cc divisions. But it was in the girls' class where she really ruled the roost. "I won Loretta Lynn's back in 2004 in the 9-13 Girls' class – it was awesome. I went 1-1-1 and ever since then I have been very motivated to always try my best – that's when I started taking things seriously."

After winning 12 more amateur titles in the 85cc class Ashley stepped up to a 125cc machine before then setting her sights on joining the professional ranks. "I wanted to become a pro in the same way that the boys do so I waited until I turned 16 then after Loretta Lynn's I raced the next Women's Motocross Association race which was Steel City at the end of Sept 2007."

Battling bad weather and footrest-deep mud and ruts as well as a field full of regular WMA national runners, Ashley's rookie ride as a pro was nothing short of amazing. Riding her 125cc two-stroke Honda against bigger, stronger women on fully-tuned 250cc four-strokes, the miniature hero bagged a moto one holeshot before slip-sliding her way back to sixth as the chequered flag flew. After throttling to another holeshot in race two Fiolek this time held down the lead before being passed by two of the sport's leading ladies – five-time WMA champ Jessica Patterson and Sarah Whitmore. Her 6-3 scorecard made for fifth overall which is a pretty good way to start any pro career.

But it was 2008 when Ashley would really come into her own as not only would she take on a full season of WMA competition she'd also journey back and forth to Europe to compete in the inaugural Women's World Championships. If that wasn't enough racing for one woman she'd also bang bars with the world's fastest females at the X-Games which was hosting Women's Moto-X racing for the first time in its illustrious history – it was gonna be a busy year for sure.

Despite still being classed as a rookie Ashley's expectations were high. "I always think that I push myself hard so I was expecting a lot of myself. I was working hard and training hard and I was hoping to podium at every race." Her prediction proved to be almost bang on the mark...

With the national WMA series not starting until June, Ashley's first two major races would be on this side of the water – rounds one and two of the Women's World Championship at Sevlievo and Mantova. The big jumps and hardpack hillsides of Bulgaria suited the young American down to the ground and after qualifying fourth ahead of reigning world champion Katherine Prumm things were looking good for Sunday's points-paying motos.

Race one saw a massive scrap between the first five riders – Fiolek, Prumm, Larissa Papenmeier, Livia Lancelot and Maria Franke – that would go right to the finish. While it was Papenmeier who took victory ahead of Lancelot, Ashley was stoked to finish third. But between motos the heavens opened turning the fast grippy circuit into a slippery mess. After clashing with the pint-sized Papenmeier at the end of lap one and hitting the deck Ashley regrouped and battled through the mud to finally finish fifth in the race for third overall.

"I really wasn't sure what to expect when I went to Bulgaria as it was a lot different from home so I just tried my best. I'm definitely glad that I got on the podium though – there are so many fast women in Europe and it's tough to do well so I was pleased to finish where I did, especially with the mud."

There was even more mud the following weekend at Mantova in Italy where Ashley had a much tougher time of it on the sand-based supercross style circuit, having to battle hard through both motos to go 5-4 for fifth overall.

Despite not yielding the results she'd have perhaps hoped for in the WWC the race experience obviously did her the world of good as on her return to the US of A Ashley was on it from the word go and decimated the competition at Hangtown and Freestone in the opening two rounds of the WMA series.

From Texas it was straight back home to Florida before Ashley and her old man jumped on yet another jet – this time back to Europe. "My dad is a pretty good guy and he can be cool when we get along, he has always been there for me even though I like to make him crazy on the long plane rides."

Despite feeling a little jet-lagged – "that's the hardest thing about racing in Europe – the time difference, yikes!" – Ashley once more put in a strong performance on foreign soil. "The first moto was pretty good, I got a decent start and I was in the top three but on the second lap I crashed and then struggled to start the bike. I went a lap down and from there I just made the best of it to come back to 11th which isn't the result I wanted but it's what I got."







"The second moto I got a good start again and I was enjoying battling with the top five – we were all going for it. In the sand section Livia and I got together and we went down. Prumm got by us both and we got going again and started battling some more. Then I got stuck behind some lappers and the best I could do was finish third which I'm happy with considering the level of competition is so high over here."

With the next rounds of the WMA and WWC series clashing Ashley had to make the tough decision of whether to stay home and race round three of the WMA championship or make another transatlantic flight to Germany for round four of the WWC. While her heart sang follow your dream and head to Europe her head wisely told her to stay home and work on extending the WMA series lead. With almost all of Ashley's sponsors being American-based it was really a no brainer...

Running 1-3 under the lights of Thunder Valley, Ashley extended her series lead to a commanding 32 points but then things went very wrong... While practising supercross for the upcoming X-Games Ashley went down hard on a triple jump and messed herself up pretty bad.

With a bunch of scrapes and a broken wrist nobody was sure if she'd heal up in time for round four – or even rounds five and six – but if Ashley's anything she's one tough little fecker and doesn't know when to quit.

Two weeks of intensive physiotherapy and the aid of a custom-made wrist brace helped Fiolek actually make it to the start line for round four in Washougal. Despite not having ridden a bike properly since her supercross crash and still being in a whole world of pain Ashley traded moto wins with Patterson who was now her biggest threat in the WMA series but can't have been feeling too great about being beaten head-to-head in a moto by someone so beat up.

The X-Games was the next major event on the horizon and should have been an excellent chance for Fiolek to shine. But another pre-event supercross training accident meant that (cr)Ashley would sit on the sidelines so yet another sassy Red Bull-sponsored athlete – Tarah Geiger – would take her gold medal. "I hit a triple and my suspension sunk down. I flew off the bike maybe 10 or 20 feet and smashed onto my head..." The impact was enough to break Ashley's Leatt-Brace and left her nursing some

nasty bruises to her shoulders and back as well as some very sore ribs. To add insult to injury she also caught a cold making for some very painful sneezing outbreaks – gazuntail!

Taking the next four weeks off to allow herself to heal up as much as possible, Ashley headed to America's toughest sand track – Southwick – for the penultimate round in the WMA series. Not quite running at full speed a rusty Ashley had to settle for two second place finishes on the day as Patterson took her first double moto victory since young Fiolek entered the scene. This meant Ashley took a 28-point lead into the final round at Steel City which pretty much guaranteed the championship was hers barring any major catastrophes – cue one act of much stupidity.

"Just a day or two before the final round of the WMA series I was at this practice track with Sarah Whitmore and Danielle Sawacki – two other WMA riders – and I was messing around and riding on my little brother's bicycle with all my gear on. I went all the way up a huge hill, it was all rocky and sketchy but I just went for it to try and show off! I started off down the hill on this little bike and I started to get head shake,



my knees hit the handlebars and I flipped over... man, what a dork!

"My shoulder was all scratched up and bleeding. Thank goodness my dad was not there because he would have freaked! My mom was on the phone talking to my trainer and she was saying 'you are not going to believe what Ash just did'... My advice would be to not try this the day before your biggest race ever!"

Although as it happens this crash had no effect whatsoever, nerves did play a major part in the run up to the event but when the gate dropped Ashley did what Ashley does best – holeshot! With JP applying some serious pressure the younger rider barely flinched and even when Patterson did make a pass stick she came right back to take the lead once more. With barely an inch separating the pair for the remainder of the moto Ashley stayed strong and crossed the line with the win in the bag – the championship was hers!

"I was so stoked when I finally won it – it was the best feeling ever, kind of like Christmas morning when you're a little kid! I think after the first couple of rounds I realized that it was possible to win in my rookie year which is

something no girl had ever done before so I was really trying to ride my best to make it possible!"

While it's not unusual for a rider to sneak a well-earned break after taking a major title, for Ashley there was no rest and just two days later her and papa Jim were headed east from their home in Florida to Holland where Ashley would compete in the final round of the WWC. Although she'd heard Lierop was a sand track what lay in wait was something way rougher than she'd ever seen before or dared to imagine. "Until now I thought that Southwick was a sand track but this place is so rough it makes that place look like a golf course!"

It's fair to say that during Saturday qualifying Ashley rode nothing like the champion she is as she struggled to come to terms with the relentless roughness of the Lierop circuit. A disappointing 13th in qualifying was a series low point for the young American starlet but rather than sit back on her laurels as the WMA champ she dug deep which is something she's proud of being well known for. "People tell me all the time that I must be very determined. You could say determined or possibly stubborn! I am a very competitive person so I think it's that what

really pushes me, I am always trying to improve myself and it just gives me a good feeling when I can. That's what makes me motivated to race!"

The motivation to do well was evident on race day when after taking the holeshot in moto one she looked like a completely different rider. "I holeshot both races and was able to run 4-3 – that was certainly much better than the previous day's qualification result for sure. The girls in Europe are definitely fast but they are so cool with it – they're nice off the track but when we get on the track it's game on! The fans in Europe are great too! Everyone made me feel really welcome."

Perhaps one of the reasons why Ashley is welcomed so graciously in Europe and pretty much everywhere she goes is because there's absolutely no sniff of rock star about her. Also her dad Jim who does most of Ashley's interpreting for her is a diamond geezer.

"He always helps me out with the media and I do need him or my mom to help interpret. I think it is a good thing that he does so well in this area, I mean if fans or the media have questions I think the riders – or in my case their parents – should always take the time to answer!"

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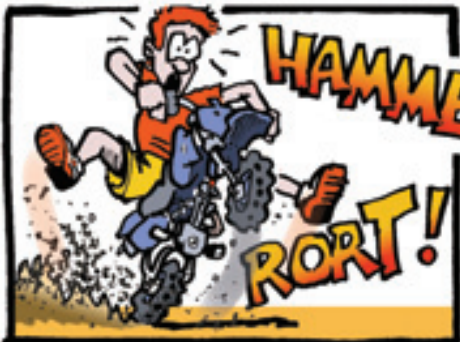
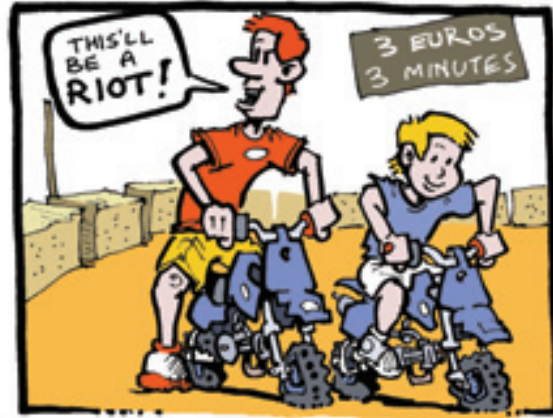
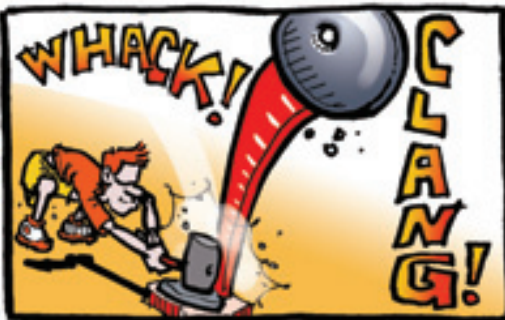
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WINTER SERIES III:
AT THE BARCELONA FAIR...



SUTTY ON TRIALS!

NOPE, PAST CRIMES HAVEN'T COME BACK TO HAUNT HIM – INSTEAD DBR'S DEPUTY DAWG'S MANAGED TO BLAG A GASSER OUT OF JOHN SHIRT JNR FOR SOME WINTER TRIALS TRAINING...

Words and photos by SuttY



What do Stefan Everts, Billy MacKenzie, Shaun Simpson, Gordon Crockard, Stephen Sword and Roger Harvey all have in common? Well aside from being motocross champions at some time or another during their glittering off-road careers they all share a dirty secret – a penchant for playing around on trials bikes.

It's fair to say that most motocross riders won't give riding trials a second thought as it's not considered to be anywhere near as cool as racing motocross. And the seemingly slow pace at which everything in the feet-up world happens is not deemed worthy of bothering with for most hardened speed freaks. But if that were the case then why would a whole host of top off-road stars break out their Gas Gas, Beta, Sherco, Scorpia or Montesa trials irons when they're not turning laps on their normal machines?

The first answer is obvious – trials riding is a lot of fun and can be enjoyed in almost every type of weather imaginable. Aside from the grin factor involved, riding trials is also a great form of cross training but most importantly for all off-road riders – including the stars mentioned above – it's an excellent way of polishing up on throttle, clutch and brake control as well as all-round bike skills.

As a fun-loving fun-lover and someone who needs more than a little skills practice on a motorised dirt-cycle – as well as being a fantasy

Kickstart competitor in my pedal-pushing youth – I've always quite fancied a go at trials myself so after blagging John Shirt Jnr's head for the last year-and-a-half he finally relented and made with a long-term test trials iron for the DBR boys – a 2009 Gas Gas TXT250.

The 250cc Gasser is considered to be the weapon of choice for the clubman rider – that includes both myself as a total trials novice and Senor Lawless who didn't have to play at Kickstart when he was a kiddie because he was doing the real thing! But after reaching the lofty heights of TV stardom, almost three decades of booze abuse and very little trials riding means he's classed as a clubman once more. But back to the bike...

Much refined for '09 the TXT has an all-new frame, new sexy white plastics, new brakes, new fuel tank and radiator – pretty much the whole shebang – and it looks the b*****s! The Gasser uses pretty much the best parts available including AJP brakes, Marzocchi forks, Sachs rear shock and a whole host of other in-house technological wizardry.

Of course, all the technical wizardry in the world is useless if your alarm clock isn't up to scratch so after sleeping in and missing the previous weekend's Lancs County trial at Brookhouse Brickworks I made sure that I wouldn't sleep in for the Westmorland MC organised four-lapper at their excellent Firbank facility high above Kendal.

Being a complete novice when it comes to these things I turned up and totally winged it. Luckily, entering and riding in a club trial seems to be as easy as pie – fill in a form or two, show your ACU licence, pass over some spondoolies and Bob's your uncle. In return I was literally given a riding number – 61 – that was printed on a small rectangular piece of paper which I had to then somehow attach to my Gasser.

Using a bit of card and a lot of insulation tape – blagged from the guy taking entries – I sort of attached my number to the front of my bike although the driving drizzle soon turned everything to mulch. Bah! After having a good look around at other bikes I noticed it's apparently possible to purchase an aftermarket front number plate that has a clear plastic holder for the numbers – clever eh?

I made a mental note to order one online from TED – www.trialendurodirect.com – and then with the wind still howling and the rain coming horizontally across the Cumbrian fellsides I headed off to section one of my 'first ever trial'©.

The first section was a relatively easy journey up a stream – clean. The second section was a relatively easy journey down a wee drop, across the remnants of a stone wall and then back up the wee drop which was now a wee rise – clean. The ride to section three was an epic, a wide open dash across the boggy moorland which in my mind was great practice for the Scott Trial which I'd like to try one day. I'd like to claim that I

rode that bit faster than anyone – sweet.

Section four was a rocky climb – clean. Section five, a little nadgery rock to pop over then a wee drop to a rocky climb on a turn – clean. Section six claimed my first lost mark when I span out and dabbed on a flat area of grass – not clean! Section seven was a nice climb through a small gully thing – clean. Section eight was quite awkward for me and the one where I lost most of my marks through the day – dagnamit.

I don't remember if there was a section nine to be honest but the last section on the lap – marked section 10 on the in-cards – was a relatively easy drop into some water then a relatively simple climb out – clean. Lap done!

In the following three laps I dropped a total of seven marks – and like totally cleaned the final lap dude – to finish sixth in the novice class on the easy course. Not bad considering I am a true trials novice and the first time I rode the Gasser was on the way to the first section.

From here it's apparent that I need to learn to ride the bike properly. Even I'm aware that I'm using the clutch way too much and using speed rather than skill to pull me through each section or over an obstacle. While a clean is still a clean it would be nice to be able to control the bike more and improve my balancing ability so that's something I plan to work on lots – I might just have to give dapper Dan Clark a call for some one-on-one coaching...

One of the most important thing about riding trials is pulling a stupid face at every given opportunity



JUDGEDREAD!

SUTTY STARTS TO STRIP DOWN HIS LATEST LOVE – A '96 CR250 EBAY BARGAIN – AS WORKS BEGINS RESTORING THE SHED OF DREAD TO ITS FORMER GLORY...

Words and photos by Sutti

With the temperature hovering a little above freezing but the wind chill factor making things feel beyond Baltic it was time to run my Snap Ons over the Shed of Dread in order to totally strip it down to nowt so I could lovingly rebuild and restore it to its former glory later!

Making two piles – keepy bits and non-keepy bits – myself and the Margenator got busy whipping bits off the beast and it wasn't long before we were making a decent headway. In next to no time it was obvious that my non-keepy bits pile was a little larger than I'd expected it to be but with new plastics planned and a whole heap of other bits and bobs in the pipeline after a little umming and ahing I guess it looked about right.

Last month I discovered the SoD is actually in a lot better condition than I could have ever dreamed when I bought it in an online auction. Yeah there are some bits that are shot but on the whole it's mechanically as sound as a pound.

One of the first things to be removed after the wheels – which unfortunately are keepers until I blag something sexier – was the exhaust system. Although I'm planning on fitting a new pipe and silencer – so it meets 2009 rather than 1996 sound levels – I kept the original parts safe as when you're a crasher like me you never know when you might need a spare. The front pipe has seen some action and is dented like an I don't know what but the silencer is in much sweeter condition. If my memory serves me correctly the stock silencer is a doddle to repack – especially with the OEM insert packing – so some silencer packing was added to my parts-to-order list along with two new rubber o-rings and a copper sealing washer for the new front pipe when that arrives.

With the seat removed and all the plastics off the CR looked quite naked. Surprisingly nothing was too rusted in place and the subframe, swinging arm and suspension linkage were all successfully removed and placed on the keepy bits pile. Before I continued onward I stripped down the suspension linkage too to see if the bushes and bearings were shot thinking this was the perfect opportunity to try and see how easy one of those All Balls linkage repair kits was to fit. But alas the roller bearings were as good as new and it looked like they'd been recently cleaned and greased – with the good sticky racing stuff too! It seems that some SoB had loved the SoD before me. I'm not sure how I feel about that if I'm honest!

While the suspension linkage was a well loved item by the previous owner, the rear brake pedal was well abused and looked at least twice as old as its true age of 13. I was counting on the pedal to be a keeper but I'm thinking I might have to trade it in for a better one. I tried calling some of the breakers who advertise in the back of T+MX but they didn't have anything suitable and nothing has come up on eBay just yet. I'm wondering if an aftermarket Sunline item might have to be blagged – keep an eye on your phone YeoeY because I may just call to give you New Year's greetings, wink wink. Thinking about it, the gear lever's equally as jank so yeah that call's definitely a coming...

The coolant system was quickly and effortlessly removed soon after which meant that the motor and electrics could then be taken from the frame as easy as candy from a baby. After testing the bike at FatCat Motoparc I'm pretty happy with the performance of the motor so that's gonna get the bare minimum of work carried out. I'll probably whack the clutch out and check the condition of the basket, inner hub and plates, replace the reeds and remove the cylinder and head to fit a new piston and rings. While the engine is on the workbench – or my dining table as I like to call it during private functions – I'll also strip down the power valve assembly and give that a damn good clean as they're prone to sticking. I believe that Mr Muscle, a Brillo pad and some elbow grease are the key ingredients to getting that job done efficiently.

The forks and triple clamps were the last items to be removed from the frame. I checked the headstock bearings at this point too and they were also fine-diddly-fine-fine.

With the frame bare and clean I took it – along with the triple clamps – to Garrick Coatings on Walton Summit in Preston for powder-coating. Mark Doherty is the Technical Manager there and he does a grand job of turning crappy looking pieces of metal like mine into works of art. >>



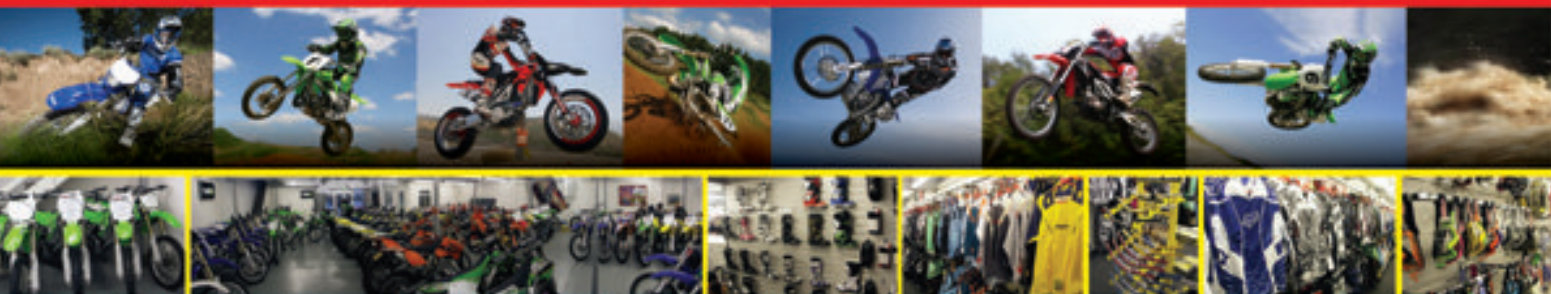


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In these modern days of aluminium frames many powder-coaters aren't seeing too many motocross machines any more but Mark has seen more than his fair share over the years as he does a lot of work for former Husaberg importer Dave Clarke as well as road racer and local legend John McGuinness.

My trip to Garrick's wasn't the best. On the positive side it meant that work on the SoD was progressing nicely but when some moron in an Iveco van sideswiped the works Tranny it kinda put a downer on my whole day. Still my mood was lifted later in the week when I went back to collect my bits – all four pieces were done to perfection which meant the SoD's rebuild could begin!

PLEA FOR PARTS!

TMV FACTORY HONDA IGNITION COVER NEEDED SHARPISH!

As I mentioned last month I'm searching for a special part for my Honda to make it look super sweet. Back in the '90s Dutch aftermarket parts manufacturer and distributor TMV used to make some very trick looking factory Honda style ignition and clutch covers – that was until Honda forced them to stop production.

These covers are now rare as rocking horse s**t but after spending hours and hours looking online I have found that occasionally they do turn up. In fact Derby dirt bike dealer Motobrox had two new ones still in the packet just before Christmas before some collector snapped them both up. If anyone has one that they'd like to sell for a reasonable price or even donate to the cause please drop me a line on 01524 834078 during office hours...



COLDPLAY!

IT'S COLDER THAN A WEASEL'S WOTSIT, WETTER THAN AN OTTER'S POCKET AND MUCKIER THAN A MINX'S MIND – SO IF YOU WANNA GO RIDING YOU BETTER MAKE SURE YOU'VE WINTER-PROOFED YOUR WEAPON

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Sutty**

With the New Year upon us and the fine British winter in full swing, it's time to take a closer look at your ride and prepare a few simple points of technicality to keep bike and rider performing through everything Mama Nature can chuck at us.

With rain, snow, ice, wind, rain, rain and some more rain a great possibility at this time of year, the bike must hang tough. There are a few key points to bike prep and maintenance through these times which will keep your puppy purring (!). This early part of the year makes for some early season racing on stubble fields and sand as these types of terrain offer the best winter surface as far as rideability is concerned.

Both motocross and three-hour type races keep going through the winter on these surfaces and the three-hour races run in all weathers. Things like bearings, cooling systems and controls take a serious beating in these conditions so look to the key points shown to give you a guide to a winter wonderland of off-road!



CARB >>

The carbs on both two and four-stroke machines must be drained after each wash. This makes a massive difference in the way the bike will run and keep its internal organs in tip top condition. It takes a couple of minutes to drain the carb and with the fuel injection era increasing in momentum this chore may soon be a thing of the past in most home garages. With the four-stroke carbs it is advisable to drain the pump diaphragm every couple of weeks. I find a good tip with carburetors in the winter is to dry them off really well with a heat gun or some kind of blow heater. If your bike is stored in a damp garage environment the inside of the carb will get white with an oily condensation and this will cause ill running. Heat it up and the condensation will disappear. For sand and heavy conditions it is also a good idea to go up one or two sizes on the mainjet to feed the motor with more fuel as the engine will be working and revving harder.



CONTROLS >>

From grips to shifters you should take time to make sure things work good in the winter. If things are looking real wet on race day I think it's a good idea to look at fitting full waffle grips. These grips are ribbed all the way around making it easier to keep hold of the bars even after a muddy crash. Handguards are a must in the winter as they will help keep your hands warm and your control areas clean. I have known riders to run some tape around their levers in really cold weather to keep fingers warmer. The type of medical tape used to tape your hands up to stop blisters is best but duct tape is also a possibility.

Low density foam is great stuff and should be used in all control areas to keep the crud out. Gear shifters can be modified for the mud and snot as the mud that collects around the footpeg and frame areas will make shifting difficult. The best mod for this is to lengthen the shift tip with an extra section welded into place so you can get your toes to it at all times.

MENT 95

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Answer Ion	£27.00
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Alpinestars Racer	£26.00
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Troylee designs SE/GR	P.O.A

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Troylee designs SE

Troylee designs GP

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PLASTICS

Polisport, UFO, Acerbis, Cymra	
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TYRES / TUBES / OILS TOO

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COOLING SYSTEM >>

Sand, slop and stubble fields are all enemies of the cooling system on your bike. I have seen engine parts melt when the motor isn't being cooled correctly due to radiator blockages. In motocross things aren't quite so bad as the races are generally short in the winter but the longer off-road events will require you to take some time to clear the rads at every opportunity and fuel stop. Larger rads are available and make a good percentage difference in cooling efficiency and therefore engine performance. Another good fix is to fit a trials bike fan to help get some air through the rads. Many people fit tights over the plastic rad louvres to stop the crud sticking to the rads but I prefer to glue or zip-tie some thin strips of foam to the plastic fins to stop the mud building up as it will not stick so well to the foam and normally shakes off when riding. Always use specified coolant in the system and never run just water.

MOTOR >>

During the winter try to change the motor/gearbox oil after every ride or every three hours. Make sure you do not rev the bike hard when you first start it in the morning. It is very important to allow the oil to get around the motor in the cold weather before you start giving it a good larruping!

AIR FILTER >>

Clean, clean, clean! After many rides in the winter months you will find the air filter will not clean up very well even after just one usage. The choice is simple at this stage. Bin it! Do not risk using a dirty filter. Make sure the filter is evenly oiled with good quality filter oil and the oil is ALL the way through the filter surfaces. Grease the fitting surface and if it gets really wet use an extra cover on the filter. Always keep a check on the inside of the rubber intake just inside the filter to make sure it stays perfectly clean during filter changes. This area must also be looked at when you are storing your bike in the winter. Place some dry cloth into the boot to help stop the condensation and damp getting into the motor's intake system. Never leave a wet filter in place after washing as this will cause running problems.

PLASTICS >>

New plastics are great in cruddy conditions. The perfect surface is difficult to stick to so the dirt falls off easily. If you coat the plastic surfaces with a good quality spray oil this will also help to stop the crud from sticking. Coat the underside of the mudguards as well as everywhere else. Make sure you cover your brake discs while spraying any oils around your bike.

FINAL DRIVE >>

The final drive for the winter should always include a quality o-ring chain. These are so good for winter riding that every bike should run with one. Pretty much every enduro bike runs with o-ring technology and every winter motocrosser should invest in the same. The chain keeps stretching to a minimum and looks after the sprockets as well. Steel or twin metal sprockets should be used during the winter and there are so many great products out there that could last you quite a few winters if cleaned and lubed well. When choosing winter gearing it is worth thinking about adding a tooth or two to the rear sprocket to help pull through the slop. This eases the pressure on the clutch as less slipping and easier pick up makes for a happy clutch.

BRAKES >>

If you are continually riding in sloppy conditions the best thing you can do is invest in some solid discs. These have no cooling holes in them so they do not fill up with grinding dirt and slop to wear the pads down so quickly. There is no real effect on overall braking performance as there is usually a fair amount of drag caused on the bike while slowing down which eases the need for aggressive braking.

PIVOT POINTS >>

Both the rear linkage and front steering pivots need attention at this time of year. They need to be well greased as the elements get into every bearing with the extra track moisture and increase in intense power washing. The steerer tube bearings take a lot of moisture into them and this will cause excess wear and seizures. The rear linkage should be stripped and cleaned before greasing. The swingarm pivot and all link bearings must be kept well lubed as any seizures in this area have a very direct effect on the rear suspension and knock-on effects in the overall handling of the bike.

SUSPENSION >>

The forks and shock of your bike will need to be set for the difficult conditions. A quick fix for both ends is to keep the shock preload at its maximum tension so if your manual says you can set your sag to between 35 and 25mm set it at 25mm for muddy conditions as the extra weight of the mud will cause the bike to run lower in the stroke. The forks should be set equally near the top of the tubes. Most manufacturers' forks have lines marked on the forks to set the heights. The fork seals should be cleaned and lightly greased after each wash to stop any dirt being forced into the lip of the seals which will cause leakage.

SECURITY >>

Remember the amount of scrotes out there looking to rob you! When you have your bike locked up between winter rides remove the wheels and keep them in a different place to the bike. This works in two ways – it makes your bike impossible to ride or push away and when the wheels are out you can check bearing and brake caliper cleanliness! Everyone's a winner (except the thieving w*****s)!

TYRES >>

Safety first! Keep a good set of mud/sand tyres on your hoops. There is absolutely no substitute for grip at this time of year and you simply will not get away with old or incorrect compound tyres during the winter. Soft terrain tyres have the knobs spread further apart and are at maximum depth to get into the dirt and create traction as well as clear more easily. Pressures should be no more than 12psi and heavy duty tubes or mousses are a must.



Stewart (#7) leads early doors from eventual winner Josh Grant (#33) and reigning champ Chad Reed (#1)

ktlanews

HUBYS



LONG SHOTS!

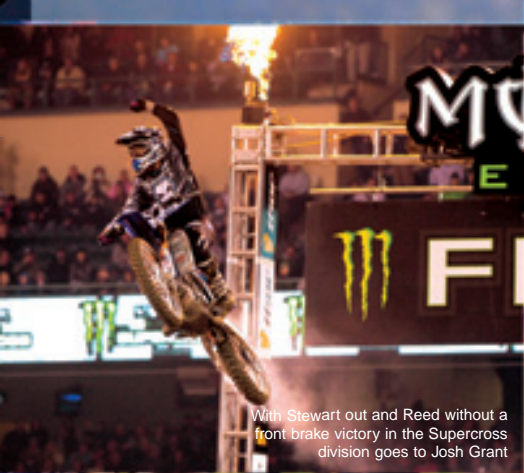
WITH HEAVILY FANCED RIDERS IN BOTH CLASSES, THE 2009 AMA SUPERCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS OFF WITH ANAHEIM #1 WHERE THE FAVOURITES FAIL TO SHINE...



Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene..

STATESIDE



With Stewart out and Reed without a front brake victory in the Supercross division goes to Josh Grant



Ryan Morais makes it a PC 1-2 in the Lites class



It's upside-down sweetheart!

Odds don't matter once the gate drops. With the 2009 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship about ready to kick off nearly everyone would've picked San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart or defending champ Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Chad Reed to win the opener. However, even in a historically somewhat predictable sport like supercross there's a reason why the races are still run anyway.

Fresh from one of the most dominant Lites careers in history, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto – in his 450cc debut – comes out strong in the opening heat race to win going away while defending champ Reed and GEICO Powersports Honda's Kevin Windham both come through from the back of the pack after falls. Villopoto's team-mate Timmy Ferry finishes second with Honda Red Bull Racing's Andrew Short third, Reed fourth, Red Bull/Troy Lee Designs Honda's Steve Boniface fifth, then Reed's team-mate Mike Alessi, MCRMX Honda's Cole Siebler, Windham and Yamaha's Josh Hill rounding out the qualifiers.

Stewart has been undefeated since his switch to the San Manuel Yamaha team – and actually for exactly 24 motos before that during the 2008 AMA Nationals, too. He had swept the US Open as well as the Bercy Supercross on his new blue mount and he keeps his win streak alive in the second heat race, winning easily over Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha's Josh Grant, Honda Red Bull Racing's Davi Millsaps, Monster/Cernic's Kawasaki's Bobby Kinniry, Honda Red Bull Racing's Ivan

Tedesco, privateer Heath Voss, MCRMX Honda's Ben Coisy, Boost Mobile/AM/PM/Monster Energy's Nick Wey and Jagermeister KTM's Josh Summey.

The stage is set for an epic Main Event when Stewart manages to snatch the holeshot with Grant and Reed giving chase. Reed makes his way by Grant on the first lap and immediately begins to catch Stewart. Before the end of the second lap Stewart cases the track's second triple just a little bit and Reed gets a run on him into a tricky rhythm section and forces Stewart to slow up for the following turn in the knowledge that Reed has the inside and the momentum.

"I washed the front end a little bit and it threw me to the outside and I heard him go triple-triple," says Stewart. "I knew there was nothing I could do – we would've just hit so I looked and saw him come by and he put in some hot laps and took off. It was good, actually, because when he was in front of me I saw some different lines he was hitting..."

Reed takes over the lead and actually begins to pull away from Stewart who doesn't look incredibly aggressive on the track. After a few laps, though, Stewart finds his rhythm and begins to reel Reed back in and on lap seven makes a pass stick on Reed. Then, leaving a 180-degree left-hand turn and heading into a short set of whoops with both riders separated by only a few feet, Stewart hesitates and Reed runs into him, sending both riders down in a heap. Stewart hits his head and is obviously dazed as he slowly gets up while Reed gets up quicker to keep hold of second.

"I just squared it up and I was going to go down the right and he kind of turned down the left and I think he caught neutral or something because I grabbed a handful and it was almost like NASCAR where I was aiming one way and he wasn't gone when I came through," Reed says. "Man, I mean, I hit him hard!"

Stewart's take is very similar. "I kind of found my rhythm and came back up and he might have started fading a little bit – I don't know what he was doing – but I went past him pretty quick. Then I came into that corner and I missed a shift and once I clicked back in all I know is I remember just like Toronto [in 2006] I was getting hit from the rear. He took me out and I was down and out right then and couldn't start my bike again."

Grant takes over the lead over Windham but then Stewart pushes his bike toward the side of the track right in front of Windham who clips Stewart's front end, sending them both crashing to the ground.

"I was happy with the way things were going [then] one lapse of concentration by one of my competitors kind of took me out," Windham says. "I've thought about what happened time and time again of what I could've done differently but I couldn't come up with anything."

The impact with Stewart leaves Reed without a front brake and he loses a spot to Short.

With a couple of laps to go Grant still holds over 10 seconds on Short in second, who has a few seconds on Reed in third. But then Grant picks up a Tuff-Block cover in his rear brake as he gets the two-to-go sign



Defending champ J-Law gets docked a place for cutting the course but it's still a solid start to the season for the controversial rider

BRING IT ON!

ESSENTIAL INFO...

The biggest personnel changes for '09 involve three of the probable top four racers in the 450cc class. James Stewart abandoned the only team he's ever known as a pro – the Monster Energy Kawasaki team – to join the San Manuel Yamaha team that Chad Reed rode for last year on his way to the 2008 Supercross championship.

Stewart changed nearly everything else as well including his gear sponsor (from Fox to Answer), boots (from Fox to Alpinestars) and helmets (from Fox to Bell). Joining him on the team is fellow Floridian and training partner Kyle Chisholm.

With the spot at Kawasaki vacated it was quickly filled, as planned, by Lites uber-champion Ryan Villopoto, straight from the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team. His team-mate is the steady and reliable Timmy Ferry.

This left Chad Reed, enjoying his post-championship off-season (not racing the Nationals) to find a ride for 2009 and, amazingly, it was difficult for the defending champ. He had an offer pre-Stewart to return to his team but didn't like it. He had another offer to go back to the direct Yamaha factory team and didn't take that either. Eventually, with considerable financial help from Rockstar Energy Drink and Makita tools, Chad Reed found a deal with Suzuki.

A few years earlier, before two-strokes had essentially fallen completely out of competition in the AMA, Reed had nearly signed with Suzuki and was even spotted testing an RM250 at Glen Helen Raceway and now he has come full circle back to Suzuki. Joining Reed on the Rockstar/Makita Suzuki team is returning fellow Aussie Michael Byrne and outdoor hero Mike Alessi on 450s and Ryan Dungey and Nico Izzi on RM-Z250s.

Then there's the fourth 450cc factor – Kevin Windham. Last year's SX series runner-up (winning four Main Events along the way) is back with the GEICO Powersports Honda team for 2009 – the same team he

has ridden for since his return to racing in the 2003 AMA Nationals. He's on the new fuel-injected CRF450R, leaving Stewart as the only rider of the 'Big Four' not to be racing a fuel-injected 450.

Joining Windham on the team are four Lites riders – 2008 Lites Eastern Regional SX champion Trey Canard, Aussie SX champ Dan Reardon, rookie Blake Wharton and, from the Pro Circuit team, Aussie Brett Metcalfe.

That's not to say the main four Supercross class men are the only contenders – as we found out at Anaheim 1 – but it's likely over the course of the season that, if they stay healthy, they will be most often near the front of the pack. In addition to them, though, we have the Honda Red Bull Racing team comprising former Lites champs Ben Townley (who will be making his return around Daytona), Davi Millsaps and Ivan Tedesco plus Andrew Short.

The MDK KTM team pulled in a major hard-liquor sponsor in Jagermeister for their 450cc squad and signed up former Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha rider Josh Summey and former Lites champ Travis Preston. On the Lites side the team has Muscle Milk as a primary sponsor and the team is comprised of Ryan Sipes, Justin Brayton, Wil Hahn and Martin Davalos. Outdoors, of course, Tommy Searle will join the ranks.

There's also Team Yamaha, made up of perpetually injured Broc Hepler (who hurt himself again at Anaheim 1) and last year's Minneapolis SX winner Josh Hill. Replacing Hepler on the team will be former British Maxxis competitor Sean Hamblin. Also on the Yamaha front is the Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha team made up of Anaheim 1 winner and many-time Lites winner Josh Grant and outdoor stand-out Cody Cooper.

In the Lites class, besides those already mentioned, the elephant in the room is the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad. With the signing of 2008 Phoenix winner (and 2009 Anaheim 1 winner) Jake Weimer they lost Brett Metcalfe to the GEICO

Powersports Honda team which pushed to find someone to replace Weimer. Also joining Weimer on the West Coast is Ryan Morais, straight from a few years at the Boost Mobile Yamaha of Troy team.

Returning for the East rounds are Austin Stroupe and long-time injured Christophe Pourcel who has lost 15kg since he last raced in the USA. Outdoors rumours have Tyla Ratray joining the squad for 2009, although at the time of publication the contract had yet to be signed.

And finally there's what's left of the aforementioned Yamaha of Troy squad. After all of Jason Lawrence's run-ins with the law and the AMA in 2008, Yamaha dropped its support of the team. But Lawrence soldiered on with support from Monster, AMIPM, Boost Mobile and more. After all, Lawrence is running the #1 plate. Nick Wey is racing a YZ450F for the team all season long as well.

The schedule in 2009 looks much like it did in 2008 with a few key changes. First, instead of waiting until nearly every West round is finished before heading to the East rounds, round four of the series will be round one of the Lites East in Houston, Texas. In addition there is an East round in Jacksonville, Florida, for the first time and the Toronto round counts for the Lites East for the first time. Also, replacing the Dallas round on the schedule is a round in the Super Dome in New Orleans and the Salt Lake City round is back for 2009 with help from the governor who is actually a motocross enthusiast.

There is not a single break in the schedule until the weekend of April 11 – that's 14 weeks in a row. This is significant for a big reason – any injuries incurred early in the series are likely as not to remain nagging injuries as there's no time off to recover from anything major. The AMA SX series is more than just a display of speed and technical riding ability. It's frequently a war of attrition and it will likely come down to that again in 2009.

2009 AMA SX CALENDAR

DATES AND VENUES

Jan 1 Angel Stadium of Anaheim (CA)
Jan 10 Chase Field, Phoenix (AZ)
Jan 17 Angel Stadium of Anaheim (CA)
Jan 24 Reliant Stadium, Houston (TX)
Jan 31 AT&T Park, San Francisco (CA)
Feb 7 Angel Stadium of Anaheim (CA)

Feb 14 Qualcomm Stadium, San Diego (CA)
Feb 21 Georgia Dome, Atlanta (GA)
Feb 28 Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis (IN)
Mar 07 Daytona International Speedway (FL)
Mar 14 Superdome, New Orleans (LA)
Mar 21 Edward Jones Dome, St Louis (MO)

Mar 28 Rogers Centre, Toronto (Canada)
April 4 Jacksonville Municipal Stadium (FL)
April 18 Qwest Stadium, Seattle (WA)
April 25 Rice Eccles Field, Salt Lake City (UT)
May 2 Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas (NV)

and promptly nearly endoes over the track's next jump. He saves it but smoke billows from the back of the machine as his hot brake rotor melts the vinyl cover. Grant struggles to keep the bike on the track with no rear brake but still manages to pull home his first 450cc supercross win in his full-time 450cc debut.

"I don't even know what to say," says the teary-eyed Grant. "I've been training hard and my team has been working hard and all I wanted to do is come in here and be a contender. To get a win is really special not only for me but for everyone on my team. I couldn't be happier right now."

Grant leads the points by default after one round with Short second, Reed third, Ferry fourth, Villopoto (who fell over early in the Main Event) fifth and Tedesco sixth. With his DNF Stewart is credited with 19th place and two points which means he trails Grant by 23 and rival Reed by 18 with 16 rounds still left to run.

The Lites class is usually even more action-packed but it's hard to top a 450cc Main Event like that one. Jake Weimer comes from behind to win the first heat race in his Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki debut over team-mate (also in his team debut) Ryan Morais and the rest of the field. However, the big news from the first heat is Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey's crash early in the event that drops him out of the heat

and sends him to the LCQ – which he handily wins.

In the second heat it's defending Lites West champ Jason Lawrence who passes a fallen 2008 Lites East champ Trey Canard to take the win while Canard's GEICO Powersports Honda team-mate Dan Reardon takes over second and Canard hangs on for third.

With a poor gate pick by virtue of his LCQ win Dungey doesn't have much of a chance at getting a good start in the Main Event and Aussie Reardon takes the holeshot over Canard, Weimer and Lawrence. In the second turn, though, Lawrence grabs the inside on Canard and loses control of his bike, taking both 2008 Lites SX champs down in one fell swoop. "It was 100 per cent my fault," admits Lawrence.

Canard can't start his bike right away and loses a lap while Lawrence gets up quickly (but at the back of the field) and begins working his way forward with a broken peak on his One Industries helmet. Although a lap apart, it isn't long before Canard and Lawrence are close to each other on the track again which worries Lawrence.

"I was scared to get by him because I didn't know what he wanted to do and it turns out he was a total fair kid and wasn't doing anything," Lawrence says. "He let me by when I got up to him."

Meanwhile, Dungey starts outside the top 10 and

Weimer goes to work on Reardon out front, finally making a pass stick on the third lap with a block pass before a tricky rhythm section.

"I knew that it would get tough later in the race so as soon as I got in the lead I tried to really lay it down and try to get myself a little gap," Weimer says. "And I did it and I got a decent gap and that allowed me to make some mistakes which I did. I figured I might and I figured that the bigger lead I had the more room I would have for whatever. That's what I did and it worked out."

Reardon, running second, is soon under pressure from Muscle Milk/MDK KTM's Justin Brayton but the two make contact in a corner and both go down, handing second to Weimer's team-mate Morais, third to Red Bull/Troy Lee Designs Honda's Chris Blose and fourth to Dungey. Dungey then gets around Blose for third and the podium is as good as set.

Weimer takes the win and the points lead with Morais second and Dungey third. Lawrence actually crosses the line fourth but is docked one position for inadvertently cutting the track earlier in the race. So Blose finishes fourth and Lawrence fifth.

"The first win is always cool just because it's a new feeling that you've never had before," grins Weimer, "but to come here to Anaheim 1, the season opener, with a new team – it's really as good as it gets."



Speedy Reedy takes Stewart down when the Yamaha rider misses a shift



Paul Carpenter takes the final position in the Supercross class top 10

SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS LITES

1	Josh Grant	25 points	1	Jake Weimer	25 points
2	Andrew Short	22	2	Ryan Morais	22
3	Chad Reed	20	3	Ryan Dungey	20
4	Timmy Ferry	18	4	Chris Blose	18
5	Ryan Villopoto	16	5	Jason Lawrence	16
6	Ivan Tedesco	15	6	Ryan Sipes	15
7	Heath Voss	14	7	Justin Brayton	14
8	Ben Coisy	13	8	Jeff Alessi	13
9	Nick Wey	12	9	Ben Evans	12
10	Paul Carpenter	11	10	Chris Gosselaar	11



AWESOMEANAHEIM!

OUR TAME CANADIAN SHARES HIS TAKE ON ALL THE SHOCKS, SUCCESSES AND SET-BACKS AS THE AMA SX SERIES GETS UNDER WAY IN SOCAL...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Wow! What a race we just saw at the house that Mickey Mouse built. Just a stone's throw from Disneyland, me and about 45,000 other people saw Joe Gibbs Racing's Josh Grant take his first ever 450 SX win.

It was an incredible night that had jaded old professionals like myself on the edge of my seat wondering what else could possibly happen. Then to top it all off Grant got a Parts Unlimited banner in his rear wheel which caused it to lock up a few times in the air. You know what he did then? He kept gassing it! I'm sure he was thinking 'screw it, I'm either winning my first SX or I'm going out in an ambulance!' Great for Josh and great for the JGR Yamaha team as they have had some bad luck since they entered the sport and had some people whispering that maybe they weren't going to come in and take over the world like some had predicted.

As I'm sure you guys know Chad Reed and James Stewart collided on lap four and that ended Stewie's night. He couldn't start his bike and when he pushed it to the side to get a better position he ended up pushing it right into a charging Kevin Windham! Could it get any nuttier than that? I think Stewie was a little koo-koo after the crash with Reed and certainly after the KW collision.

So what else did I take away from this race? Here are some more random thoughts...

Pro Circuit's Jake 'The Snake' Weimer won the 250F class in his debut ride for Pro Circuit and JC Waterhouse – the manager of Jake's team (Geico Honda) last year – was last seen measuring himself for a noose. You see, they thought they had a deal with Jake only to see him bolt last summer to the green team. It would be like you owning a horse since birth, nurturing it, giving it the love and attention it needs and cleaning up its poop for years. And just when it's going to be the next Secretariat somebody offers the horse more carrots and it wanders over to another stall. Jake just has to concentrate on qualifying for next week's Main and he'll be all good.

What happened to the odds-on favourite in the

250F class, Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey? He had a rough night when his bike broke on the face of a jump and he ended pretty hard. He came back to win the LCQ and even though he had a bad start due to his gate position he put his head down, came from 10th to third and had himself a pretty good night from what could have been disaster. His ride did nothing to deter the odds-makers from moving him off the board as the favourite.

I don't know what Davi Millsaps was up to on Saturday night but he definitely didn't feel like SX racing. He was one of those guys that some people mentioned could upset the apple cart and stick his red fender in there and be a player but judging from his race at A1 he looks like he's been thinking a lot more about chilling on the river with his new wife than riding. It's only one race so no reason to jump on him yet but by the time you guys read this we should know more on whether or not Anaheim was a fluke.

Tim Ferry had an okay race – he got fourth but he wasn't happy that Shorty and Ivan Tedesco passed him during the Main. He mentioned to me that the track was really rough and that he pumped up enough that his "grips felt like paper towel rolls". He was losing some time when he wouldn't triple in the section before the finish but when I asked him about why he didn't jump it he said he did a lot but then quit later on. I never saw him do it but I tend to believe the guy who was actually riding. As usual, Red Dog will be a player in this series before it's all over and we should cheer on senior citizens when we can. It's good for them to have goals.

Jason Lawrence, the little hellion of the supercross world and the defending Western Region SX champ, had a pretty good night when he finished fourth. In true J-Law fashion he cannot avoid the controversy and was docked one position for cutting the track so he ended up fifth. He made no effort to go back on but the penalty fit the crime as he didn't cut that much off the track. We really didn't learn much from the 250F class at Anaheim –

Dungey looks fast and J-Law looks fast but they didn't go head to head like we thought they would. And Jake the Snake Weimer might have something to say about the title before it's all said and done.

Bobby Kinsky of the Cernic's Kawasaki team is a pretty good 450 rider! The diminutive New Yorker ran up front in his heat race and looked like he belonged in the big boys' class. He had some bad luck in the Main but still surprised me with his speed this weekend. If you would've told me that Bobby would have qualified and Travis Preston, Josh Hansen and Troy Adams would not have I would've said you were nuts.

A few rules that were changed in the off-season that I never really read anywhere were implemented for 2009. The weight limit went up in both classes (that's a good thing as the 450s were not there yet and the teams were spending thousands trying to meet it), the 250F class was cut to 20 guys in the Main (I don't agree with this as you should give the privateers and teams all the spots you can) and you have to use the stock valve angle now in your bike. So no more getting blank cylinderheads from the factories and making your own angles which is something that gives you the ability to really tune the power to the upper RPMs. The PC guys have been suspected of doing this on their ultra fast bikes and almost all the rule changes were made to bring the cost of racing down.

Another team that had a great pit presence was Hart and Huntington Honda. There were cool looking bikes, a DJ booth, smoke machines, loud music, half naked girls and people playing beer pong under their tent. All in all it was a cool scene but that's about the entire highlight of the team's night as Troy Adams and Josh Hansen failed to qualify for the Main Event. Adams crashed in the LCQ first turn and Hanny battled arm pump according to team manager Kenny 'the original K-Dub' Watson.

See you all next issue where I will have even more supercross reports from over here on the left.





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SHOOTING STARS!

FIM PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR SARAH GUTIERREZ SHARES SOME OF HER – AND HER PARTNER MIGUEL ANGEL QUERALT'S – FAVOURITE MOTOCROSS IMAGES OF 2008...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Sarah Gutierrez and Miguel Angel Queralt**



Two of the hardest working photographers in GP motocross are Catalan couple Sarah Gutierrez and Miguel Angel Queralt who hail from Baltarga – a village that's nestled high in the Pyrenees some 150km north of Barcelona – in Spain. Week in, week out you can guarantee to see Sarah and Miki at the races – usually sporting smiles as they go about their work. As two of the most popular and technically proficient photographers on the scene it was of little surprise to us when Sarah snagged the title of FIM Photographer of the Year although for Sarah it was much more of a shock...

DBR: How did it feel to win the FIM Photographer of the Year award?

SG: "It was amazing and a big surprise when my name was announced at the awards ceremony. I never thought I could win that award and even less so this year. I honestly think that there are better photographers in the press room and I really think that we – Miki and I – need to improve so much to be at the level where we want to be."

DBR: You mentioned a higher level so which other photographers inspire you?

SG: "Definitely Ray Archer. Ray is one of the photographers I have learnt so much from and every time I see his images I ask myself why didn't I see that? How does he get this quality? Taking a look at him – and also Massimo Zanzani – I have learned that you always must be there and that the best picture could always be the next one so you never stop working."

"Then there are some other great photographers in the US too such as Frank Hoppen and Simon Cudby. It is always nice to see their images and then there's Jonty Edmunds too who works mostly in enduro – his photos are always impressive."

DBR: What equipment do you normally use?

SG: "I shoot with a Canon 1D Mark III body and use the following lenses – a 300mm, 70-200mm, 16-35mm, 24-70mm and finally a 15mm fisheye. I also have an EX 580II flash even though I don't like to use it so much."

"As Miki and I work together there are some

lenses we have both and there are some others we exchange sometimes between races. Normally I carry the 300 and Miki the fisheye – that allows us to make completely different kind of images and show different points of view from the same race."

DBR: Do you have a favourite motocross photo?

SG: "I really don't have just one – there are lots of them! I suppose it's any picture that transports you to the race, that makes you feel that you're there and that shows a good moment whether it be the rider, something in the background or even just the light."

DBR: Congratulations again on winning the award – are there any final words you'd like to add?

SG: "I would just like to say thanks to all the people who have shown confidence in Miki and myself, the magazines, teams and riders we are working for and also all the people in the press room and paddock that are always there to help out and give good advice – basically all the people that made this award possible."

*The calm before the storm!
Sarah Gutierrez gets
ready to go to work at
St Jean d'Angely*





MX1, Locket



Steve Ramon, Nelspruit



Tyla Rattray, Bellpuig







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MADNESS!

WIDELY REGARDED AS THE OLDEST MOTORCYCLE RACE IN THE WORLD, THE WILD AND WOOLLY IS AN ANNUAL PORTION OF PAIN THAT DATES BACK TO 1925 WHEN PEOPLE REALLY DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER...

Words by Fraser Law Photos by motoxphotos.co.uk

Quite possibly the oldest motorcycle race in the world, the Wild and Woolly Scramble started life on Boxing Day in 1925 as the Blisworth point-to-point race and save for the odd world war, the Suez crisis and a foot and mouth outbreak it's been an annual event ever since.

In 1932 the race was renamed The Wild and Woolly and the Ladies Cup was presented to the winner for the first time, a tradition which continues to this day. In the late 1980s the venue switched from the infamous Tunnel Hill Farm, taking in a number of local venues before settling on the current circuit at Arm Farm. The 2008 event begins with bright sunshine despite the freezing temperatures and a record

crowd lines the banks eager for a large portion of other people's suffering – what the Germans call *schadenfreude*. Despite relatively mild weather in the previous few weeks, the track – initially looking easy-going – tests all who compete.

Bikes first take to the track at 10am for two laps of a practice session kept deliberately short in order not to lose too many riders at this early stage! Inevitably there are always a few that fall at the first hurdle and never make the start as the various engine waterproofing techniques get their first test.

At precisely 11am the flag drops on the silent startline. As the bikes roar into life a pre-race favourite Robert Harries takes an early lead on his Mick Berrill Honda 450 and quickly builds up

a healthy advantage. Following him around on the first lap is Fro Systems' Mark McCann whose fast start ends in one of the ditches on lap two. Next up is '04 winner James Berrill on another Mick Berrill Honda – this time a 250 – tailed in fourth by eight-time winner Ryan Griffiths on a TRM Honda 450, closely followed by defending champ and the oldest ever winner Richard Main riding his 250 Yamaha.

With three previous winners in the top five, the battle intensifies as the water crossings get seriously gnarly. The bright early sunshine soon does a runner and is replaced by freezing cloud cover as the racing deteriorates into trench warfare. Mud-covered bikes, riders and helpers became indistinguishable from each other as all

Ben Howkins takes the plunge



Each lap features four deep water crossings – this one is clearly not the first of the day for Nigel Batchelor

fight to escape from the steaming carnage.

Harries uses his trials skills to great advantage and holds a commanding lead until disaster strikes on lap five and he disappears from the leaderboard. Berrill takes advantage and inherits the lead which he holds for another seven laps as behind him Griffiths continues to circulate in front of Main. Further back Jack Lee battles with Scott Bates and Andy Bucknall while Dennis Harrison debuts the two-wheel drive Christini KTM to mixed effect.

On lap six Griffiths struggles to restart his bike after yet another muddy incident, losing valuable time and allowing Main through into second. Two laps later Griffiths manages to catch and repass Main before setting about

closing the gap on the leader. On lap 12 Griffiths is right up on Berrill's rear wheel at the front but Main's chances of retaining his title go pear-shaped when he falls and busts a couple of ribs. Despite losing a lap and being in a whole world of hurt Main grits his teeth and continues to the flag. With Main floundering, Joe Mitchinson moves up a place into third which he keeps to the finish.

With time running out Griffiths finally gets in front and when Berrill loses valuable time removing fencing from his rear wheel the race is effectively over.

"When I was stuck in the waterhole for over a minute I thought there was no way there was going to be a ninth win this year," grins Griffiths.

"After that I just got my head down – if it wasn't for my mate Matthew helping me out of the waterhole we'd still be trying to get round now.

"When we did the two laps of practice I was stuck in the waterhole on the second lap and I thought then 'this is going to be hard!' To the people who say there's not enough water in there, they should go and stand in there right now and see what they think."

As the quad bike recovery team tow stricken bikes back to the pits there's time to reflect on the success of yet another Woolly. What other closed to club event attracts such massive interest from riders, spectators and media alike? The Wild and Woolly is an extremely difficult and unique event – long may it continue.

TEAMSPIRIT!

ALL ABOUT THE WOOLLY...

While entry to the track is free for spectators, they are encouraged to give generously to the organised collections and many thousands of pounds are raised every year for local charities.

The race is incredibly popular with the public and the track is completely engulfed as thousands turn out every Boxing Day to cheer on the muddy mayhem. To keep these spectators safe the track needs much more preparation than for a normal event and this requires a huge team effort.

To enter the race riders need to be members of the Northampton club. A condition of entry is that they attend at least two working parties before and a clearing up party after the event. What this means is that all participants have a sense of ownership of the race and it creates a unique camaraderie between rival competitors.

Because of the deep water, machine preparation is also a vital aspect. Many different approaches are adopted to keep engines running, ranging from simple duct taping of airboxes to elaborate rear mudguard mounted snorkel devices. Most bikes also have front and rear rope loops attached to assist with removal from the dreaded water crossings. To utilise these many of the front runners have assistants deployed in the most treacherous water hazards eager and ready to dive in and pull their riders out each time they slide, somersault or plunge to a halt.

The original race format is still used, making it unusual by modern standards. It features just one race lasting approximately one hour, kicked off by a dead engine start. With four deep water crossings per lap and icy cold conditions this is normally more than enough for anyone.

Adam Castledine heads to a top 10 finish – thanks mainly to his sweet set of after-market handguards



James Berrill leads for seven laps before Ryan Griffiths hits the front

The Wild and Woolly is a huge spectator draw



Win #9 for Ryan Griffiths

WILDANDWOOLLY

RESULTS >>>

1	Ryan Griffiths	(450cc TRM Honda)	15 laps
2	James Berrill	(250cc Mick Berrill Honda)	14 laps
3	Joe Mitchinson	(250cc KTM)	14
4	Richard Main	(250cc Yamaha)	14
5	Jack Lee	(John Lee Gas Gas)	13 laps
6	Nigel Batchelor	(250cc Kawasaki)	11 laps
7	Dennis Harrison	(250cc KTM)	11
8	Scott Bates	(250cc Kawasaki)	11
9	Adam Castledine	(450cc Castledine Suzuki)	10 laps
10	Jonathan Lee	(450cc John Lee Honda)	10

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09 **GEAR**

RACE

A motocross rider is captured in mid-air, performing a wheelie. The rider is wearing a red, white, and yellow jersey with 'VER' visible on the sleeve, a blue and white helmet, and green and white pants. The motorcycle is heavily splattered with mud. The background is a clear blue sky, and a crowd of spectators is visible at the bottom of the frame.

BIGWHEEL BATTLEERS!

RYAN HOUGHTON VERSUS MATTIE FLEMING

FAMILY TIES!

MEET THE NEW KEET ON THE BLOCK

MANX MOTIVATION!

HITTING THE ROAD – AND WAVES – WITH THE COOPER CLAN

RYANHOUGHTON

FAMILY TIES!

DAVID'S THE NEW KEET ON THE BLOCK

As a schoolboy national champion himself back in the day at Junior 65cc level, Alan Keet is proving to be a real inspiration as well as someone to look up to as another member of the Keet family sets out on the national glory trail.

Alan's 10-year-old cousin David Keet has his sights set firmly on the BYMX and Elite Youth Cup championships this year and will be doing his best to keep the family tradition alive by getting his name engraved on a piece of Junior 65cc silverware too. Over the past couple of seasons the Portsmouth club member has been making real progress with the '07 All British Auto title on his racing CV along with a cracking fourth place finish at the MX Master Kids event in Belgium that very same year.

If his end of '08 form is anything to go by in carding a seventh place finish on Weston beach and having a cracking little dice with Conrad Mewse in the Wilden winter events, David will be a force to be reckoned with in '09. David's efforts have already attracted the attention of Mick Baker at Imp Racing along with Dave, Karen and Scott Grant at Golden Tyre who together with International Moto X products will be supporting and looking out for the young Pompey flier as he attempts to swap the #55 plate for the coveted red #1.



© Racers Edge



James aims to take full advantage of Paul Cowshall's coaching skills

© Racers Edge

JAMES HAS THE EDGE!

HOTSHOT HARRISON HOOKS UP WITH TOP TRAINER

Over the past few months in RAGE we have been casting a sideways glance or two, taking a close look at a few of the guys who we think just might have the ability and the bottle to rattle a few cages at national level this coming season.

The spotlight this month falls on 13-year-old James Harrison. Dorset and Hants club member James has had a rough time of it over the past couple of seasons with injuries that have severely disrupted his progress. Recently, however, with the help of Paul Cowshall at the Racers Edge training facility James has been getting his head down, putting in the hard work and focusing to really get his career back on track.

Paul Cowshall is himself a former schoolboy ace from a family steeped in a long motocross tradition who now works as an ACU certified trainer so he knows a thing or two about up and coming talent. "I have known James for a long time and I have recently started to coach him," explains Paul. "James is a real student of the sport with a massive potential and his goals are set for the very top in 2009."

Looking at some of the results James has already delivered it's hard to argue against that point. If you were down at Landrake last July for the Elite Youth Cup National you would have seen him giving Ben Watson, James Dunn and Liam Garland a good run for their money. In an impressive performance he posted a hat-trick of third place finishes in a series of five races. At the close of play James had claimed the third podium step in a meeting that was filled with the best talent around at the time on Small Wheels.

Also in a recent Portsmouth club Big Wheel encounter James managed to wrestle a race win away from Robbie Muscat so the signs are all good and pointing just one way as he heads into the '09 Big Wheel 85cc national season.

For more on Paul Cowshall and the Racers Edge facility hook up to www.racersedgmx.co.uk



David's already got a super-sweet style



Mattie's a top tip for some major silverware this year

Ryan's looking to add to his trophy cabinet



Ryan chases Mattie at Polesworth

BIGWHEELBATTLEERS!

RYAN AND MATTIE SQUARE UP AT POLESWORTH

The Danger UK team of Josh Waterman plus Jamie, Ryan and Louis Houghton will be a highly visible crew of racers on the youth circuit this coming season if their new kit and KTM machinery colour scheme is anything to go by. There are however more than just cosmetic changes going on in the East Anglian-based outfit...

The logistical control for the team in 2009 is being handled by Ian and Angie Houghton with Chris Barker juggling the spanners in an all-out effort to lift a national title or two. While Josh will be one of the favourites for the BYMX and MX2 crowns, Ryan will have real hopes of becoming the Big Wheel supremo at either BYMX or Elite Youth Cup levels.

The main challenge to Ryan for the BYMX title could well come from top class cross-border raider Matthew Fleming. Matthew from Fife in Scotland is a real powerhouse performer on the four-banger Honda. He also packs a mighty wallop as an amateur boxer too showing real potential in the ring – and it could well be the

lure of the canvas that ends up being Mattie's sporting choice in the years to come. Matthew has flown the flag for Scotland to good effect in past seasons, especially in 2007 when he won the BYMX Small Wheel championship.

At a Polesworth meeting recently both guys came together for the first time since the end of last year's national season, giving Rage the perfect opportunity to run the rule over them and size up their title potential. Ryan is a full school year younger than Matthew but he has more experience of the Big Wheel scene with this term being his third campaign. Weight against power output is always a big issue in the green plate division and both guys are tall young fellas pushing the limits for 85cc racing. Mattie weighs in at his current fighting limit of 58 kilos while Ryan is growing fast too, tipping the scales at 53 kilos.

It's all set up to be the classic two versus four-stroke shootout and, as an added dimension, Ryan on the specially-built Dutch big-framed, highly-tuned KTM will also be hoping

to break the trend of recent seasons where four-stroke Hondas in the hands of Luke Hawkins and Sam Davis have claimed the last two titles.

At Polesworth it was Ryan who got off to a flier, converting a great start into a race win as Mattie was forced to fight his way through the pack up to second after struggling out of the gate. Still, considering Matthew hadn't ridden the Midlands circuit for five years apart from a few practice laps at the start of the day it was a pretty impressive effort.

Race two saw both riders going toe-to-toe from gate to flag with Mattie just getting the upper hand. But the young Scot was docked a place for passing on a yellow flag so going into the final moto Ryan was in command.

Third time out Mattie took full advantage of a misfire with Ryan's Katoom to claim the win as his rival nursed his bike home in second. There is nothing to choose between these two classy performers right now. Watch out for the re-match coming soon at the BYMX at Mildenhall.

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MAX!

RAGE'S STAR COLUMNIST DOES A SPOT
OF BIKE SWAPPING AT THE MINI Os...

Words by Max Anstie

Hi everyone! Firstly, I hope you all had a cracking Christmas. I know by the time you read this Christmas will be long gone but still...

So we're back in America testing and preparing for the Mini Olympics. You remember way back at Mammoth MX my factory 250F was called Mary Jane? Then at Loretta's my Supermini was called Julie, then my Dodge AMP 250F was Nikki and now we move on to my Mini Os 250F which I've christened Porsche! Ha ha.

We have been doing a lot of supercross work down at the KTM test track just to see where we are against the other riders and to see if I'll be ready for 2010 Anaheim 1. I'm sure I will be. At the Mini Olympics in Florida I was racing five classes and having to race back-to-back 125cc stock, 250F mod, 125cc mod, 250F stock and so on. Now we're racing at such a high level there's a good 10 of us that if up front early on have a shot at winning. And when you are racing back-to-back on different bikes and switching between two and four-stroke power the slightest mistake can cost you.

I do really enjoy the 125cc class because the bike feels like my old 85cc – really light and great for whipping and all that fun stuff. But it was making my life hard work at the Mini Os, especially in the supercross. Going from stock 125 to mod 250F is hard work because the races are so intense and short, by the time you've just got the feel for one bike you're on another! But it's all a good learning experience!

As the week started I was riding really well in the supercross. Obviously, coming from Bercy and Sheffield I was all ready for that. But luck wasn't on our side. By the time the finals came I had been disqualified for going too fast and almost disqualified again for walking the track. But I had a lot of good races and really enjoyed it even if I didn't get the result I wanted.

Now onto the outdoors. The programme at the Mini Olympics is three days SX and then three days outdoors. Makes it a bit more fun. The track was really nice and I put in a few good heat race results to make sure I was going into the Mains with a good shot at the title.

Unfortunately, I went down early on in one of my first Mains and a few mechanical issues set me back a little and I once again didn't end up with the result I wanted. But that's racing and we had a lot of fun and know what we need to do. And still it was only really my second race on the big bikes so I felt I was doing okay!

So we got back to CA and wonderfully the weather had cooled down! We were still continuing my supercross work as well as heading off to some of the local tracks to catch up with Tommy Searle and a few other guys out here. Then we had a Latvian kid fly in to see if he wants to be on this team my dad's running – KTM R&R Monster Energy junior team army or something like that! The Latvian's name is Caspar and he's really cool and pretty fast! I said to him he should have a little ghost painted on the back of his helmet. It was nice to have a training partner for a few weeks.

That's the lot for another month – until next month keep it on two wheels...

Max

dirtbikerider 119

MANX MOTIVATION!

COOPER CLAN'S GOT DEDICATION...

Who pays the ferryman? I'm not quite sure where that phrase comes from but I certainly know one family it applies to!

Spare a thought for the Cooper clan from Ballaugh on the Isle of Man – every weekend they want to go national racing it's a major financial outlay just to get to the starting gate. And it's not only the cash consideration that makes this family's commitment extraordinary – just take a look at a typical 'weekend'.

For a single race meeting it can mean a mid-week or Thursday start followed by a long ferry and road haul. The return journey snatching sleep whenever possible can be even more disruptive with a 2.15am ferry deadline to meet before docking at 5.45 followed by a quick 'hello' to home before Callan gets off to school. As a solution to some of the travelling issues taking in two events on consecutive weekends without returning home has been the answer in the past and there will be more of that to come this year in a programme that takes careful planning.

But what about schooling you might ask? Well, thanks to the worldwide webby thing Callan gets all the knowledge fed to him via internet schooling and is often bouncing up and down in the back of the camper doing the maths and building up the grey matter on the move. His mates know only too well not to come calling before midday when he's in the paddock as he will still have his head down – no, not asleep but engrossed in school work.

Over the past couple of seasons Callan has been something of an unsung hero, going so close to winning a national title at both 65cc



Junior and 85cc SW levels in consecutive seasons on the BYMX and KWS stages. But this season could well be 12-year-old Callan's year as he plans a major tilt at both BYMX Small Wheel and KWS mini masters titles. The sponsorship efforts are going well too as Callan will be on the Roland Shaw Hardcore machine next term with added assistance from the Road and Track dealership on the Isle of Man together with Golden Tyre, Muk Junkie, Evo Tech, HGS, Moggstar and VHM. The IoM schoolboy motocross club also pitch in and it's a big thanks also to Mark Bishop (ARB Tuning) for all of his assistance over the past years.

Over the winter months Callan will be training with fellow Manxmen Alex Rockwell, David Knight and the McCanney brothers in preparation for the big kick-off. As a way of chilling out Callan loves a bit of mad mountain biking and the recent acquisition of a new 125cc Beta trials iron has given yet another dimension to having fun on two wheels. The new machine is proving to be so popular in fact it's difficult to get Callan off it right now so dad can have a go. Make no mistake though Callan will be all fired up and in perfect shape for the big showdown come the spring.

Got a story for Rage? Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mike@ragextra.co.uk



FESTIVESPIRIT!

BILLY CUTS LOOSE IN LA AND AT DONINGTON BEFORE GETTING DOWN TO SOME HARD GRAFT...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Suttty

Training in Derby, living at the house, new house mate, Christmas, New Year, LA rave, staying with Tommy, Donington car race, Easty, Dougan, riding at home...

Well guys, the fun is over now. I'm staying in Derby now and training my ass off with Tommy's old trainer Kirk. It was a decision I made towards the end of last year. I got bored at home again and decided to trot on down to Derby as I'm sure I mentioned in one of my other columns. Anyways, b*****s to talking about all that – I'm sitting here trying to remember what I've been doing since my last column but since that was two months ago I'll just crack on with what's been going on recently.

I'm at Tommy's house in California right now, completely knackered from riding today. The riding routine started on Monday so every day until I go home now is gym in the morning, riding in the afternoon and running when I get home. It takes its toll on you. Since I've been here I've had an amazing time though!

I arrived here on December 29 so we were looking to kick off New Year in a different way from my normal Edinburgh street party. I was looking forward to something new as that's my whole thing right now, just getting out and seeing all the different things in the world. I get proper excited about that stuff now after my travelling!

It wasn't going exactly to plan though – there were a few options but I wasn't sure I was gonna fit in. I was invited to Langston's house for his big New Year party but I thought that I wouldn't know very many people or that there wasn't gonna be many single chicks there as everyone in America just loves being married! The other option was to go hang out with J-Law at Metzger's house – kindly organised by Scott from Monster – but I'm a bit of a J-Law fan and I

thought I'd just make a fool of myself! And I didn't want to encourage him to be bad before Anaheim so I gave that a miss too. Plus my brother, BC, Si Lawson and Teasy my mechanic were all over with me and I didn't wanna go gate-crashing any parties with my own crew.

So we decided just to head into the nearest town and go mad by ourselves. We picked my bro and that up from their hotel in Anaheim and they were all bang up for it! Me and Teasy were stressing a bit as time was cracking on and we hadn't made any solid plans. We're all in the car and the question was asked 'what we doing?' and we didn't know! We were just driving looking for a crowd of people pretty much. We decided to head to Long Beach. Teasy was driving – I'd brought him over a week early cos I promised him a good year and so far he was doing all the driving and hitting lots of dead ends. Long Beach was non-existent! It was like driving through Compton or something. Stevie wasn't helping matters either as he was already p****d up in the back cracking jokes about Teasy's driving. I could sense the tension in the air – Stevie was getting more annoying and Teasy was getting more stressed!

So anyway, after the Long Beach disaster Teasy made the decision to go to Los Angeles and just go for it in the bars and clubs. But the traffic was terrible, it seemed everyone was heading to LA.

Teasy had relaxed a little but now me, Stevie, Si and BC were all drunk! I remembered that we had another option for a party – a guy called Jake who works for Monster had told us about some kinda rave that was going on. We originally ditched the idea as it wasn't really something I was interested in but as we didn't have many options left I called Jake and he gave us

directions to the LA Sports Arena (kinda like Sheffield).

Well, as we were pulling up I couldn't believe my eyes – it was insane! There was a queue about half-a-mile long, five people deep all dressed in the most outrageous raving gear I've ever seen! Girls were wearing pretty much next to nothing with neon paint everywhere, cool glosticks and stuff! I couldn't believe it! We hit the total jackpot – there were 50,000 people altogether at this place, three main arenas with loads of different DJs playing and the craziest people you have ever seen.

I had no idea how I was gonna get into this place and I wasn't gonna line up for the amount of hours in the queue. We hit up some tickets from a random guy outside – at \$70 a ticket we probably paid way over the odds but we had to get in – and luckily found a back entrance into the main arena.

Just as we were all lining up in the queue everyone seemed to start pushing and before I knew it we were in a little riot to push past the guards! I was right in the middle so couldn't do anything except go with the flow. I saw a gap and went to run but was tackled by two bins that had been pushed over! I went down hard and smacked my elbow but I got up and ran and I was in for free except I'd already paid! I'd never seen anything like it in my life – there were so many people, so many hot girls, the music was awesome and it was a total free for all. There were no guards at all and everyone was running total riot! There was an hour before New Year so it was enough time to get the drinks in and get very merry for the bells.

The DJ was Armin van Buuren and he was playing a nine-hour set! Armin van Buuren was voted the best DJ of 2008 and even beat Tiesto



(to be debated) but the tunes were sick and I got right into it! The show was amazing, he had the coolest light show and there was a massive screen behind the DJ playing the coolest shots of everything, like a big visualizer. The show was choreographed so well – the guy had actually brought the girls from the singles to come and sing at his show – and to say it was big is a bit of an understatement. It was massive – 50,000 people all raving their hearts out.

So the night went on until 4am and I stayed until the last dying minutes. Stevie, BC and Si had all left at about 1am and I was cutting about meeting lots of new people. Teasy was lost in there somewhere too but I knew he'd be having a good time. I met some crazy Yugoslavian woman who said she could give me a lift home in the morning as I wasn't sure if Teasy had left or what but as we left the place I met up with him back at the truck and all was good.

So it was probably the coolest New Year of my life and something I definitely wanna do again.

We had the weekend to kill before the hard work started again so we all went to Anaheim to watch the first supercross. I got fully hooked up with Monster again and was in the VIP section with all the celebs! The race was one of the best I've seen too – the battle with Reedy and Stewart was awesome but to be fair to Grant he was actually fastest in all the practices. I was praying for him though when he had the bale cover in his back wheel – he was still hitting all the triples and stuff and I was scared for him! But he brought her home which was cool.

So, yeah, that was the exciting part of my month – the rest has been total solitude. I've been up at 6.30 every morning and to the gym to get a beasting from Kirk, then back again in the

afternoon for running and weight sessions. It made a massive difference – I can see my body has changed already and I'm definitely better at dealing with pain now!

Oh there was one more cool thing I've been up to this winter! I got wind of a car race going on at Donington. It was an invite thing by Simon Gillett (the guy who owns the place) so I asked around and he said it was cool if I got an entry! We had to have a partner so I was teamed up with Easty! We had to buy a car for under 500 quid, the race was at night and there were 15 cars on the grid. Dougan was up staying at mine for the weekend along with my new house-mate Fergo. So off I went and bought a trick BMW 5 series for 200 notes! It was a big old two litre thing, maroon with rear wheel drive!

We rocked up in style in one of the coolest cars there. The only cars that were gonna be any competition were Simon Gillett's 3.5 litre BMW and Chris Walker's 3 litre Toyota Supra! But Easty was revved up and so was I! Dougan was meant to partner up with Dobber but Jamie pussied out at the last minute so Doogz was upset that he couldn't race. The race was 20 laps – five laps each with pit stops. Easty was kind enough to let Doogz ride shotgun with me for the first five laps.

It was the craziest thing I've ever entered! I was sooooo nervous before the start of the race – way more nervous than I've ever been at the start of a motocross race, mainly because I knew I wasn't good at driving a car! We all lined up on the grid in F1 style – I was seventh on the grid from the hat selection and me and Doogz were s*****g it, sat behind the wheel with my Nations helmet on! The light went off and it was all engines go – we raced to the first corner like maniacs where a big Mercedes span off and

opened the door for me to move to fourth straight away! I made another pass on a Toyota Celica into the second bend then it was a chase on for Gillett and Walker! I was throwing the BMW around like I was a pro driver, I couldn't believe the moves I was pulling off.

I was right behind them for three laps, carrying so much corner speed the back end was drifting round every corner. I kept shouting over to Jase 'how am I doing this?' but the reason was that I could judge the corner speed so much better being the guy behind. But when we got to the straights they would leave me big time! On the third lap I managed to get level with Simon down Craner Curves but left the braking way too late and drifted it down the inside, fully ramming him off the track!

So I was now in second place behind Walker but I had smashed my left-hand back wing in and it was rubbing on the tyre so we had to make a pit stop and pull it out. We managed to get it fixed and I let Easty in the driver's seat with Doogz still passenger. We were way down but we clawed it back bit by bit, even with a slight detour off the track into a wall! I had to sit on the wall and leg press the car out to get us back in the race but people were dropping like flies everywhere – Walker was out, Gillett too. In fact the only guy in the race was the Celica and we had a battle royale right down to the last lap! Across the finish line we were only about one second from the win! Easty was so pumped – it was such a buzz, like karting but 20 times better, like being in a proper computer game! I had so much adrenalin running round my body was shaking!

Right, gotta go – it's bedtime then gym, motocross and running tomorrow just like last week. Ooooh,

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